

Early Mughal Painting

Milo Cleveland Beach

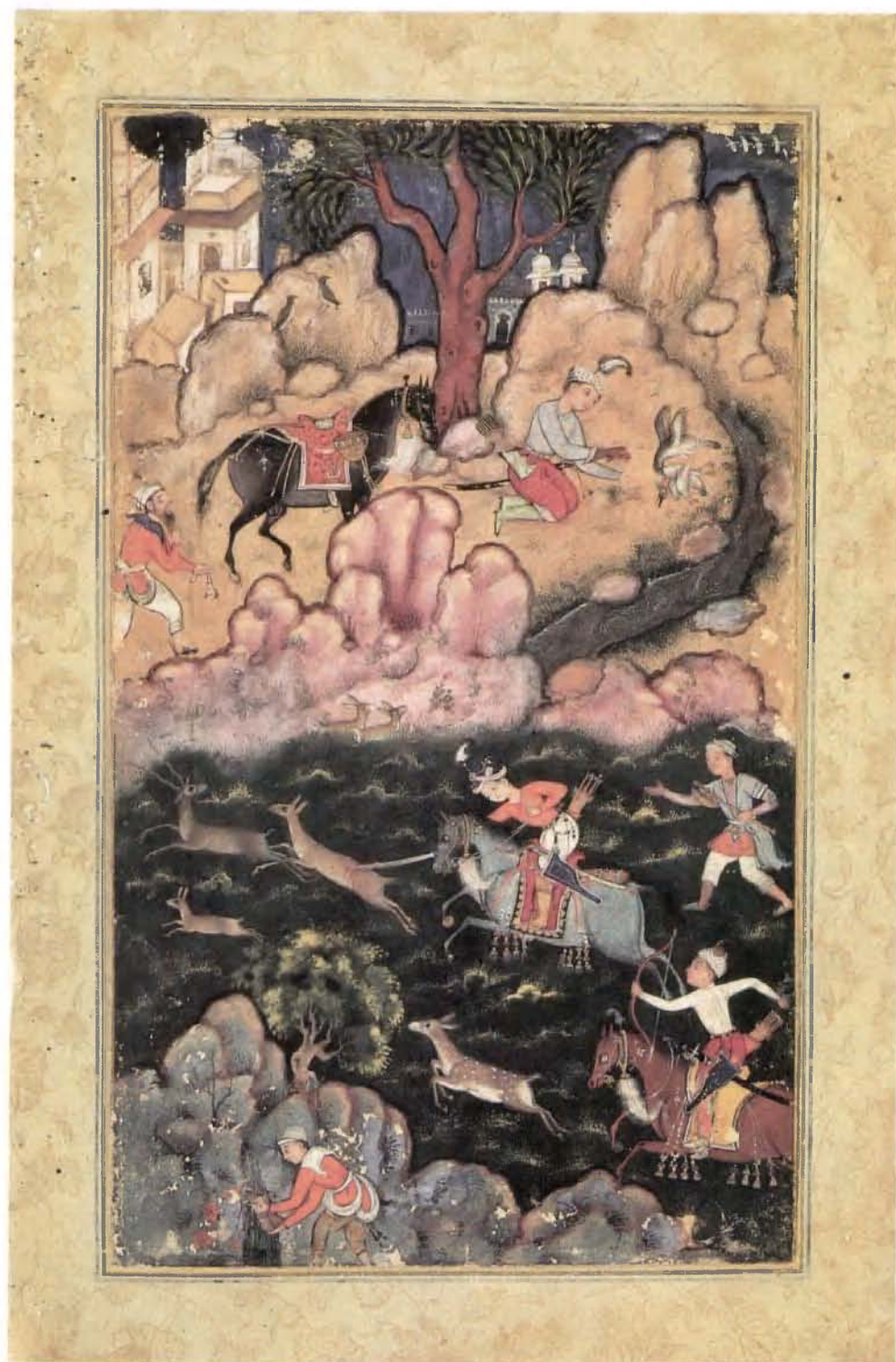
**POLSKY LECTURES IN INDIAN AND SOUTHEAST
ASIAN ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY**



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EARLY MUGHAL PAINTING

*The Polsky Lectures
in Indian and Southeast Asian
Art and Archaeology*



Prince Akbar Hunting a Nilgae.

Early Mughal Painting

MILO CLEVELAND BEACH

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Designed by Gwen Frankfeldt

For my parents

Preface

THE TEXT of this book has been adapted from a series of three lectures given at the Asia Society in New York City during the fall of 1985. The Polsky Lectures were established by Cynthia Hazen Polsky, and it was a great honor to follow Dr. Pramod Chandra, who initiated the series in 1981, and Dr. A. J. Bernet-Kempers in this biennial event.

The Festival of India, an extraordinary series of exhibitions, performing arts programs, and other activities, also opened in New York in September 1985. Two major museum exhibitions at that time focused on Mughal India, so a reconsideration of some aspects of Mughal painting seemed to be an appropriate topic for the lectures. As research for the talks progressed, it became clear to me that many entrenched ideas about Mughal art needed reexamination. To the extent to which this has been done here, this study should be considered work-in-progress and read as a series of speculations. We know enough about the Mughals now to realize that we know less than we had ever before thought.

Since the first Europeans reached the court of Akbar in the later sixteenth century, Mughal India has provided the European and American world with idealized and often quite fantastic images of physical wealth and artistic splendor—the term “mogul” has even entered our vocabulary to indicate any particularly important and powerful person. The Mughals were unusually receptive to foreign visitors and attitudes, often absorbing and adapting imported ideas within their own cultural system. This is directly visible even in their paintings, which therefore seem comprehensible (and easily interesting) to Europeans and Americans seeking to learn about the sub-

continent. Of the varied and rich output of artists in India, it is Mughal painting—the least traditional of all Indian arts—that has achieved the greatest popularity in the non-Asian world. However, it is necessary to go beyond the initial fascination of identifying cross-cultural contacts to locate the traditional elements of style that continually resist novelty and change. In many cases these represent Indian values, and only by comprehending them can Mughal painting be properly understood on its own terms.

I am particularly grateful to Cynthia Hazen Polsky for the invitation to deliver the third series of Polsky Lectures. Her energy and enthusiasm have established an important focus for students and scholars of Indian art.

Allen Wardwell, past director of the Asia Society Galleries, and Andrew Pekarik, the current director, have supported this project in important ways. The work could also not have been accomplished without the generosity of the museum directors and curators and the private collectors whose works are discussed and reproduced.

Students at Williams College, where I taught until recently, were patient and constructively critical with many of the ideas presented in this volume; their contributions to it are substantial.

The greatest patience and support, however, came from my family; the book is a tribute to them.

M.C.B.

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EARLY MUGHAL PAINTING

Introduction

THE Mughal Emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605) was an energetic, domineering, and creative political figure. As a patron of the arts, the works he commissioned attest to his involvement with artistic production and his developing respect for technical and aesthetic quality. Born in 1542, he was only thirteen when he inherited his throne from his father Humayun (r. 1530–1540; 1555–1556). Akbar's quick and successful efforts to strengthen and expand his empire, coupled with his youth and his wide-ranging interests, have made him an especially appealing, even charismatic, figure to historians.

Many memorable words have been written about Akbar's importance to the arts of India. One recent account described the emperor's relation to his painters by saying that he was "their creative mind . . . Akbar inspired the painters who gave form to his vision. His genius worked through their sensitivity and craftsmanship."¹ In another instance, the greatest of the manuscripts the emperor commissioned, the physically large and visually turbulent *Dastan-i-Amir Hamza*, or *Hamza-nama*, was characterized as "a vision of the world through the eyes of a lion. And the lion, of course, was Akbar."²

There is ample historical precedent for these claims. During the emperor's lifetime, he commissioned an official biography, the *Akbar-nama*, to be written by his friend and confidant Abu'l Fazl. In that text the author described the greatness of the Iranian artist Abd as-Samad, who had come to India with Humayun: "Though he had learnt the art [painting] before he was made a grandee of the Court, his perfection was mainly due to the wonderful effect of a look of His Majesty [Akbar], which caused him to turn from that which is form to that

which is spirit." He then discussed the artist Daswanth, whom Akbar considered the greatest of his Indian painters: "One day the eye of His Majesty fell on him; his talent was discovered . . . In a short time he surpassed all painters, and became the first master of the age."³ For Abu'l Fazl, no less than for twentieth-century art historians, the greatness of Mughal painters was a direct result of the greatness of their patron.

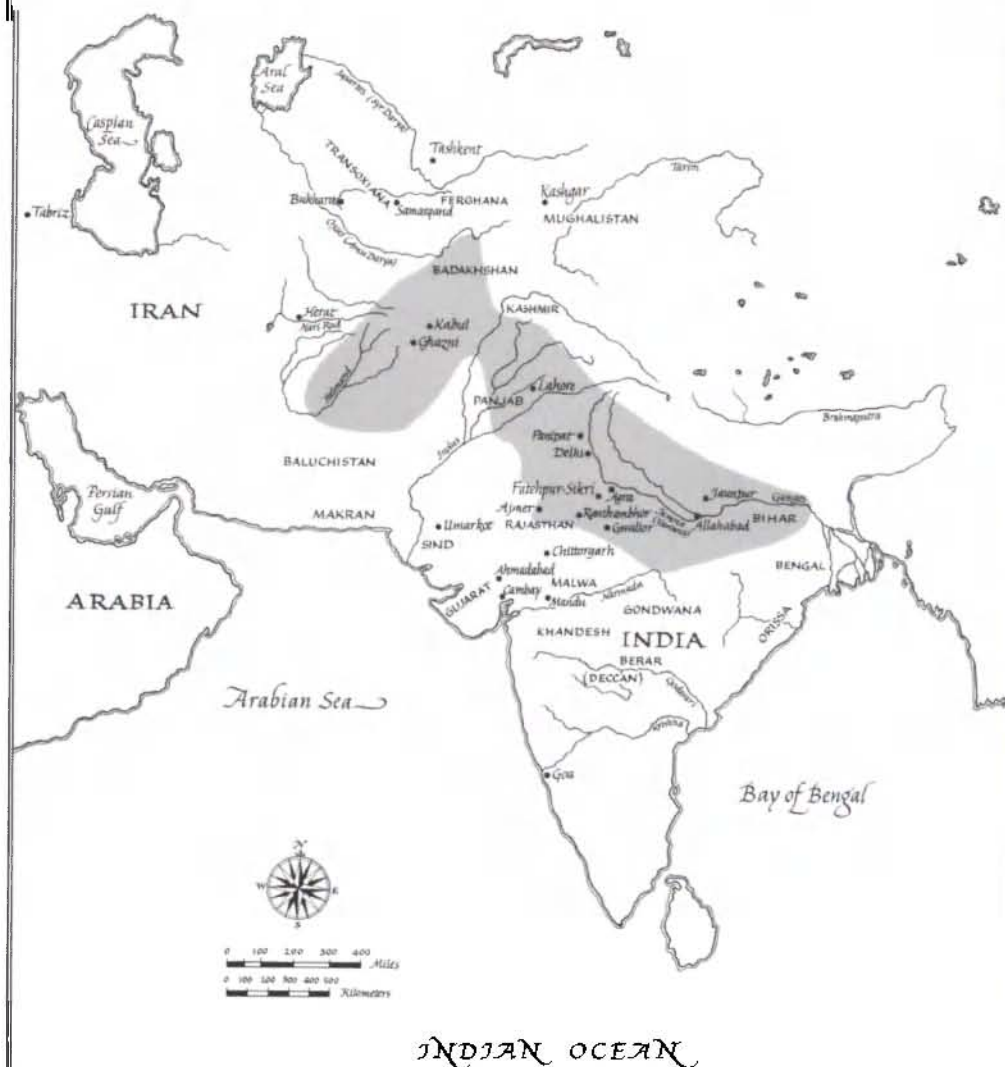
The conclusion that Akbar was a "genius" and his artists only "craftsmen," however, is no longer acceptable. Studies of painting during the period of Akbar's rule have concentrated on those elements that seemed new and different within the Islamic and Indian contexts, relating many of them to Akbar's known interests. (This was also what Abu'l Fazl stressed in the sixteenth century, his text quite frankly written to glorify the emperor.) Increasing knowledge of Mughal history suggests that many of Akbar's enthusiasms were not exclusively his own, and an expanded knowledge of Mughal and Islamic painting provides many and repeated precedents for the work of his artists. The purpose of this book, therefore, is to discuss the role that tradition played in the early stages of Mughal artistic patronage. The accomplishments of painters working for Akbar are undeniable, but they were achieved far more slowly and tentatively than has hitherto been acknowledged.

THE Mughal empire had been established by Humayun's father, Emperor Babur (r. 1526–1530). When Babur arrived in India, ousted from his former homelands in eastern Iran, he seized power from an existing Islamic dynasty, the Lodis, whose capital was Agra. Islamic rulers had controlled central areas of north India since the late twelfth century, although much of the northern subcontinent was still ruled by Hindu chieftains. These independent and semi-independent Hindu kingdoms were heirs to the rich artistic history of the country, even if the alien Islamic presence had long discouraged both the productivity and visibility of non-Muslim artistic traditions. Several of these Hindu states, most of which were ruled by Rajputs—a clan designation, with caste connotations—contained painters working under royal, priestly and/or merchant patronage. Artists of one area occasionally interacted

with those of another, and many artists sought employment without concern for the religious affiliation of the patron. When the Mughals established painting workshops, therefore, they were following accepted custom, as were the artists seeking employment at the new, affluent Mughal court.

The early Mughal emperors hired artists from many of the Indian traditions, as well as from Iran, and each contributed to the resulting new Mughal style. However, as the Mughals became politically paramount, evolving Mughal practices began to influence and dominate the arts of the subcontinent. From Akbar's reign, Mughal painting is the central style, and most other painting traditions can be understood only in relation to Mughal imperial taste. This new development came about not because Mughal artists were radically innovative, but because they were so deeply embedded in past tradition.

Mughal India and Timurid Central Asia



The shaded area shows the Mughal Empire at the time of Babur's death (1530).

Ascherl

I

Humayun and the Young Akbar

SOURCES FOR THE
MUGHAL STYLE

WHEN Akbar succeeded to the throne of Delhi in 1556, he came into control of a narrow strip of land stretching from Kabul (now in Afghanistan) to Agra. This kingdom had been inherited in 1530 by his father, Humayun. Ousted from power and sent into exile a decade later, Humayun was able to regain this territory in India—after a fifteen-year absence—only seven months before his death. At the time of Akbar's accession, therefore, the young ruler had had little direct experience of his new kingdom and its subjects. He had been born at Amarkot in Sind (now part of Pakistan), but most of his life had been spent at Kabul, separated from the subcontinent by the mountains of the Hindu Kush.

Humayun's father, Babur, had been the ruler of Ferghana, in eastern Iran. He too had come into India from Kabul, where he subsequently maintained a lavish court. A contemporary nobleman left the following recollection of this period: "Those days that I spent in Kabul were the freest from care and sorrow of any I have ever experienced, or ever shall experience. I spent two years and a half at the court of this excellent Prince [Babur], in a continual succession of enjoyments, and in the most complete abandonment to pleasure and absence of preoccupation . . . I never suffered even a headache unless from the effects of wine; and never felt distressed or sad, except on account of the ringlets of some beloved one."¹

Babur was a descendant of the great Turko-Mongol conqueror Timur, whose family had ruled in Iran from 1369 to 1507. But since Babur was born in 1483, we must set his early life against the background of dynastic political decline. As a

Timurid prince, he hoped to revive his family's political potency. Timur's capital at Samarkand, as well as the surrounding territories of Transoxiana (now the Uzbek People's Republic of the Soviet Union), therefore assumed tremendous symbolic importance. Babur tried three times to capture Samarkand, a city he describes in great detail in the *Babur-nama*, dwelling at length on its architecture and gardens. Even his expeditions into India followed the precedent established by Timur's invasion of the subcontinent in 1398. When he described his new capital at Agra, for example, he wrote: "Mulla Sharaf, writing in the *Zafar-nama* about the building of Timur Beg's Stone Mosque, lays stress on the fact that on it 200 stone-cutters worked . . . But 680 men worked daily on my buildings in Agra and of Agra stone-cutters only; while 1491 stone-cutters worked daily on my buildings in Agra, Sikri, Biana, Dulpur, Gualiar and Kuil."² Timur's achievements, it seems, provided the model for Babur's aspirations.

The Mughal empire in India had strong ties to lands in the north. Geographically, politically, and culturally, the territory stretching from Herat, the last Timurid capital, north to Samarkand and east to Kashgar was home. Lands in India originally were considered southward extensions of the natural Mughal patrimony. The maintenance of ties with the northern area was essential for dynastic identity and justification.

When Humayun was removed from the throne in 1540, he went to the court of the Safavid Shah Tahmasp in Iran, seeking troops, funds, and support for a return invasion of Delhi. Tahmasp was wealthy and immensely cultured; his court exemplified imperial splendor and power. Humayun, by establishing a visible association with Tahmasp, could therefore only increase in stature. The Shah did assign an army to Humayun, but the Mughal also took advantage of the Iranian ruler's growing lack of interest in the artists whom he had, until then, lavishly patronized. These men were still in evidence at court, however, and a few of Humayun's followers were portrayed by them.³ Humayun offered employment to several of these artists and craftsmen. In 1549 at least two painters, Mir Sayyid Ali and Abd as-Samad, came to the Mughal court, which was then in Kabul, moving to India with

Humayun when he returned to Delhi in 1555. Both remained in the Mughal workshops after Humayun's death, and works painted there by each of them have been identified. They continue the great tradition of Safavid Iranian court painting and have long been considered to be the starting point from which the Mughal style developed.

Prince Akbar Presents a Painting to Humayun in a Tree-House (Figure 1), by Abd as-Samad, is among these early works. It is purely Iranian in style; only the subject and certain details of the costumes betray a Mughal affiliation. Forms are organized to create a rich and intricate surface pattern, which the colors carefully balance and enliven. However, space is legible—a roughly accurate ground plan could be drawn—and depth is shown by overlapping and diagonal recession lines. Every detail of the surface is crystal clear and equally stressed. There is neither atmospheric perspective nor diminution of size according to distance. Lines and patterns are meticulous; wall surfaces, tile patterns, and textiles are minutely detailed. Yet despite such close observation, there are only slight differences among the faces. Figures are types, not individuals. As our eyes move over the surface, no one detail predominates; it is only slowly that we discover the imperial figures among the branches. Although this must be considered a Mughal painting, the designation is determined by the patron, not by the style. The turbans are crucial for identification, for they are distinctive of Humayun's court.

An important, but generally overlooked, aspect of the work is its historically descriptive subject matter. This may depict a specific event, for in the *Akbar-nama* it was written: "Among the wonderful events and unusual traits of H.M. the Shahinshah [Akbar] which came forth from the ambush of secrecy and displayed their splendours in the theatre of manifestation, there was this that when H.M. Jahanbani Jinnat Ashiyani [Humayun] had come to Delhi after the victory over Sikandar, he (Akbar) there practiced drawing in accordance with a sublime suggestion (of Humayun?). The skilful artists such as Mir Saiyid [Sayyid] Ali and Khwaja Abdul-Samad Shirinqalm [Abd as-Samad], who were among the matchless ones of this art, were in his service and were instructing him."⁴



1. *Prince Akbar Presents a Painting to Humayun in a Tree-House*. By Abd as-Samad. From the *Gulshan Album*. Mughal, ca. 1555.

The scene may allude to this relationship between Prince Akbar and Abd as-Samad. Furthermore, the painting being presented is a minute copy of this very work; as an extraordinary technical tour de force, it well embodies the taste of the time. In a contemporary history, for example, it was written: "Another [master] is the painter Maulana 'Abd al-Samad, the unique of the time (*farid al-dahr*), the *shirin-qalam* ["Sweet-Pen"], who has surpassed his contemporaries. He has made on a grain of rice a large field, on which a group is playing polo—two posts at one end and two at the other, with seven players on the field and behind them a rank of footmen who hand out mallets . . . Another of these rare craftsmen is Maulana Fakhr the book-binder, who has made twenty-five holes in a poppy seed."⁵

It would have been quite in character for the artist to have asked the Prince to present to his father a painting of himself making that exact presentation. (Whether or not this was the case is pure speculation.) If we are to believe Abu'l Fazl, the work may have been executed in Delhi, for it was only after his father's reconquest of the city that Akbar himself began to paint. The elaborate wall paintings behind the emperor may be accurate descriptions of a kind of painting now completely lost to us.

The earliest major manuscript attributable to Akbar's patronage is the *Dastan-i-Amir Hamza* (or *Hamza-nama*), a project directed in turn by Mir Sayyid Ali and Abd as-Samad. The great paintings from the manuscript are of a very different character from any known works by the two Iranian artists datable to the years before their move to India. The comparison of a *Hamza-nama* illustration with a work done by Mir Sayyid Ali, but in Iran, provides an excellent means to define those innovations with which Akbar is credited.

Both are encampment scenes, in which the narrative unfolds in a landscape dominated by tents. The work by Mir Sayyid Ali (Figure 2) is one of the most familiar and often exhibited of all Persian paintings; because of its author and his career, it is also a uniquely useful document. It is much smaller in size than the Mughal illustration and of extraordinary physical and visual delicacy. The narrative relates the meeting of the fathers of Laila and Majnun, lovers separated by family rivalry. Each figure, whether in the background or the foreground, is



2. *Encampment Scene*. By Mir Sayyid Ali. Iran, Tabriz, ca. 1540.



3. *Tul Being Flayed Alive by the Order of Tahmasp*. From a *Hamza-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1562–1577.

painted with equal care, of the same size, and placed with immense care, making us aware of the intricacy of surface design and a consistency of visual interest throughout the entire scene. The viewer moves slowly through the work, admiring the minute and technically immaculate patterning on the tents, for example, or of the carpets and other textiles. Nothing breaks a slow, visual delectation of line, color, pattern, and descriptive skill. The main narrative, the meeting of the men at the lower left, is hardly emphasized and is no more interesting than any of the myriad, but narratively extraneous, activities elsewhere: the laundress wringing out her clothes, a mother nursing her child, a goat being milked, a youth tending a fire. It is an elegant, highly restrained work. So many small, equally stressed details demand our attention that the painting makes its cumulative impact only after prolonged looking. These characteristics, and those of *Prince Akbar Presents a Painting to Humayun in a Tree-House*, define the basic Iranian artistic attitudes inherited by the Mughals.

The *Hamza-nama* page, *Tul Being Flayed Alive by the Order of Tahmasp* (Figure 3), by contrast, is strong and instantaneous in effect. Here the large forms are organized to emphasize the narrative episode: the central execution scene. Gestures and facial expressions are dramatic, even theatrical, and there is no restraint. The episode is a flaying, and the victim, alive and conscious, is placed in the foreground, his skin ripped open so that we look directly and unavoidably into his wound. It is a violent and far more immediate work, even if the flat space, the interest in textile patterns, and some figure types ally it to the Iranian precedent. The narrative is all important. Mir Sayyid Ali had used his story to provide a tour de force of observation and technique; the unknown painter simply wanted to tell a story as effectively and directly as possible.

The *Hamza-nama* could not be confused with an Iranian manuscript, and it has been taken as evidence of Akbar's initiative as a patron that so original a style could develop so early in his reign. Some of the process whereby a distinctive Mughal manner of painting evolved under Akbar's patronage can be explained by an even earlier manuscript, the *Tuti-nama* (Tales of a Parrot). The initial relationship of these two vol-

umes can be introduced with another encampment scene, *The Disguised Arab Is Whipped by Her Husband* (Figure 4). Spatially, dramatically, and compositionally far simpler, the *Tuti-nama* illustration is nonetheless closely allied in its narrative directness to the larger and later *Hamza-nama* page. On the other hand, it is no closer to the Mir Sayyid Ali *Encampment Scene*, indicating that other elements fed into the early Mughal style.

The more one studies the *Tuti-nama*, where there is far less stylistic homogeneity and even rougher execution than in the *Hamza-nama*, the more startling is the claim that Akbar, however precocious, could have single-handedly encouraged so immediately eclectic, innovative, and distinctive a production. It is eclectic because the various illustrations drew directly from many of the existing traditions of painting in both Hindu and Muslim India, as well as from established Iranian styles.

The Merchant's Daughter Meets the Gardener (Figure 5) was discussed in the original, brief publication of the *Tuti-nama* because of its clear derivation from a pre-Mughal Indian style best represented by *Nanda and the Elders* (Figure 6), from a Hindu *Bhagavata Purana* series now unfortunately dispersed.⁶ The painter of the *Tuti-nama* page must have received prior training in this style before taking employment in the imperial workshops. However, *The Third Suitor Shoots the Wicked Fairy* (Figure 42), also from the *Tuti-nama*, is in a quite unrelated style. Here the angel, the dominant mountain, and the gold background are details found frequently in Iranian works—as is the horse, with its coat patterned like the marbled pages popular in the Islamic world. The *Tuti-nama* shows these varied constituent elements of the Mughal style before they blended; and the *Hamza-nama* is an initial result of the process set in motion in this manuscript. Moreover, the *Tuti-nama* overall is so clearly earlier than the earliest stylistically Mughal pages of the *Hamza-nama*, that it is impossible to accept its contemporaneity with even the beginning of the *Hamza-nama* project. It also lacks the stylistic focus that the directors imposed on the later manuscript. The most reliable studies indicate that the *Hamza-nama* was begun in 1562,⁷ so the *Tuti-nama* must be dated to the very earliest years (1556–1560) of Akbar's reign.



4. *The Disguised Arab Is Whipped by Her Husband.* From a *Tuti-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1556–1560.



5. *The Merchant's Daughter Meets the Gardener.* From a *Tuti-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1556–1560.



6. *Nanda and the Elders.* From a *Bhagavata Purana* series. India (probably Rajput), ca. 1540.

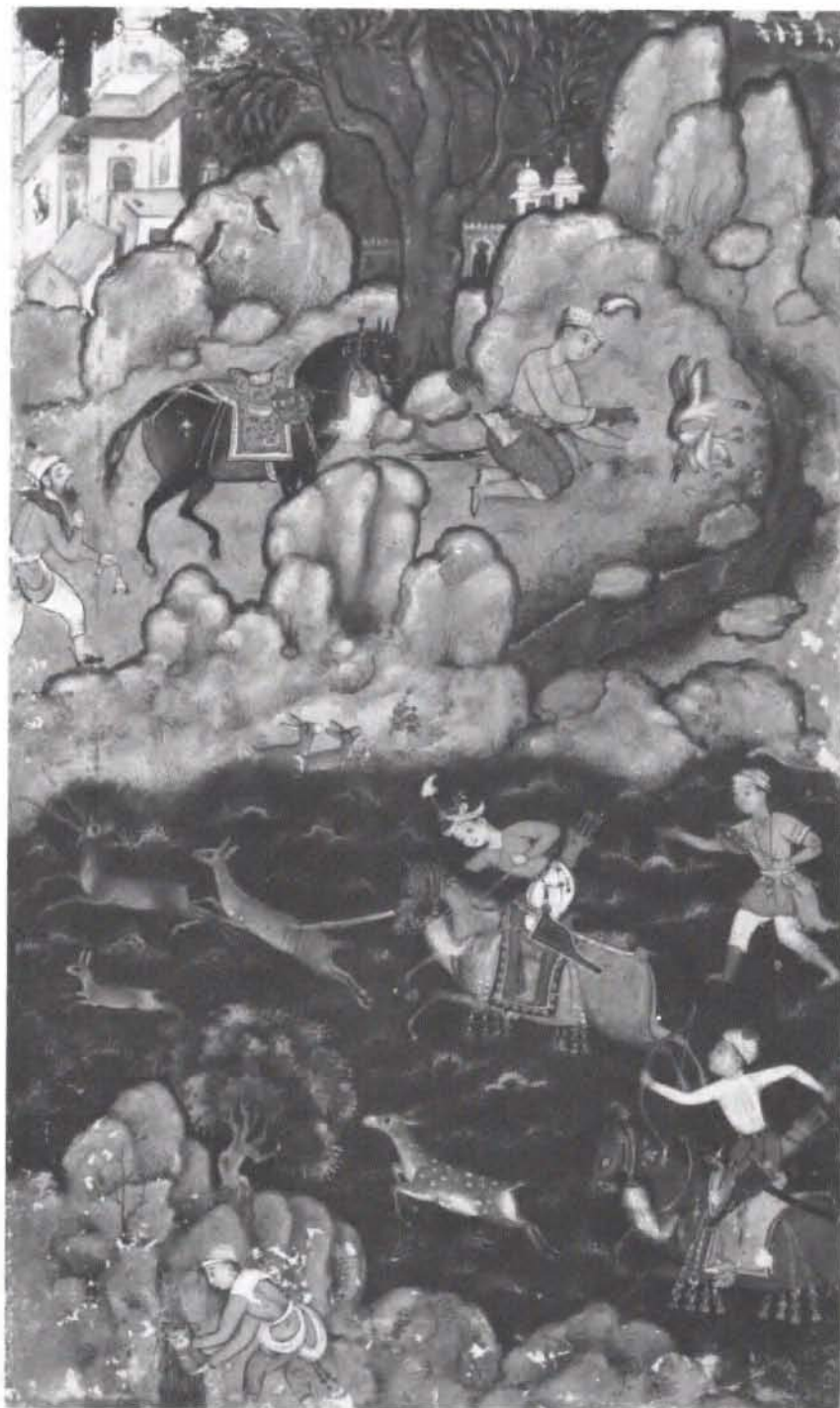
A great deal that is new and unanticipated is found in many of the manuscript's illustrations. The strong, clear, and exciting narrative and the animated expressions on faces have no known precedent in Indian or Islamic traditions. *The Disguised Arab Is Whipped by Her Husband* is an excellent example. There is also a completely unprecedented use of pigment. The forms of the trees in *The Merchant's Daughter Meets the Gardener*, for example, are carefully outlined and filled with solid, flat color, creating a strong surface pattern that has long been standard procedure. Those in *The Donkey in a Tiger's Skin* (Figure 7), however, are quickly and spontaneously painted, giving a sense both of the movement of the brush and the texture of the pigment; effectively decorative surface pattern is irrelevant. Nothing in Islamic or Indian traditions can explain this radically different approach to technique. The closest visual precedent for the effect is found in early sixteenth-century works from northern Europe, whether manuscripts, tapestries, or such otherwise very different drawings as the works of Albrecht Altdorfer.⁸ Whether popular equivalents for such works actually reached India is not recorded, although of course northern European prints and wall hangings were already being sent to the East during these years.⁹ It has been assumed that such new traits, which are further developed in the *Hamza-nama*, evolved during execution of the *Tuti-nama* manuscript, because of new incentives provided by Akbar's patronage. If this is the case, however, the process is unclear. Nothing in the component styles, or the interests represented by those styles, anticipates or explains either the artists' new-found abilities or the strength and certainty with which those discoveries were handled so quickly by so many different artists.

On the other hand, a recently discovered hunting scene, *Prince Akbar Hunting a Nilgae* (Figure 8 and Frontispiece), suggests a different possibility. In the foreground of this relatively simple depiction, a young prince on horseback wounds a female antelope; behind, a falconer kneels beside a river; and in the distance a fortress can be seen. The work is very close in style to some pages from the *Tuti-nama*. *A Woman Encounters a Leopard* (Figure 9) is equally rough in execution and naive in effect. It too places mountains across the middle of the picture



7. *The Donkey in a Tiger's Skin*. From a *Tuti-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1556–1560.

as a means of separating foreground from background. Here, however, the upper space is integrated with the lower by the elimination of the additional episode seen at the top of the hunting scene, and by the use of the leopard to unite the areas and create spatial continuity. These changes focus the narrative on a single incident, increasing the dramatic impact. The *Hamza-nama*, and later Akbari manuscripts, further refine the spatial and narrative intensity developed by such small changes.



8. *Prince Akbar Hunting a Nilgae*. From the Fitzwilliam Album. Mughal, ca. 1555.



9. *A Woman Encounters a Leopard*. From a *Tuti-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1556–1560.

The hunting scene relates most closely in style to early stylistic phases of the *Tuti-nama*. The prince, moreover, wears a turban of a type invented by Humayun, but out of fashion after Akbar's accession.¹⁰ This tall, conical cap wound with decorative and even imported materials was replaced by the

tighter, more rounded turban favored by Akbar from the time of his accession (seen in *A Prince Hunting with Falcons*, Figure 39). This Humayuni headgear remained popular only among some (usually elderly) courtiers thereby proclaiming their affiliation to the late emperor; it appears nowhere in the *Tutinama*. The important question, however, is what this or any other detail can tell about the date of the hunting scene.

The specificity of the turban and the explicit details that describe the action and the setting suggest that this is a historical, rather than a literary or poetic, incident. In the *Akbar-nama*, Abu'l Fazl describes an event which occurred upon Humayun's reentry into Delhi. The date was July 20, 1555; the place the banks of the Jumna River near the fort at Salimgarh. "His Majesty [Humayun] . . . alighted at Salimgarh which is on the north of Delhi and on the bank of the Jamuna . . . On this day and while on the march His Majesty the Shahinshah [Prince Akbar] struck a nilagao (an antelope) with his sword and took it as prey . . . His Majesty Jahanbani [Humayun] who . . . had given up the eating of animals now turned his thoughts towards the making of a beginning (of eating flesh). On this day he rejoiced exceedingly and ordered that a piece of the nilagao be dried and kept in order that when . . . he should be disposed to eat animal food, he might make his first meal from this flesh. He then returned thanks to God."¹¹

This seems unquestionably to be the scene shown in Figure 8. Even the details of the background—a river and a fortress—match the careful verbal description of the setting. To consider whether the image could have been executed at the time of the hunt, and therefore during Humayun's reign—a fact that could radically alter our ideas of early Mughal patronage—we must examine what we know of painting under that emperor.

I HAVE mentioned the presence of Mir Sayyid Ali and Abd as-Samad at Humayun's court. In addition, a third great painter, Maulana (or Mulla) Dust, also known as Dust Muhammad, joined the emperor in Kabul.¹² His greatest illustration for Humayun is a scene in which the emperor and his brother



10. *Humayun and His Brothers in a Landscape*. Attributed to Dust Muhammad. From the Berlin Album. Mughal, ca. 1550.

Hindal, surrounded by other brothers, nobles, and the harem, sit in a mountain landscape (Figure 10). It is a visually turbulent work that corroborates the opinion expressed by Bayazid Bayat, who served under Humayun: "In the opinion of experts Mulla Dost's landscape paintings excelled those of Mani [the legendary inventor of the art of painting]. And God knows the truth."¹³ The mountains are completely inhospitable, although the liveliness of the work comes from the landscape; the people seem as insubstantial as cardboard. And despite the diminished size of the figures in the background, there is no spatial depth. All shapes are on the surface, and many can be read as more than one form. At the upper right, for example, we see a mountain that is also a tusked elephant, and other hills conceal grotesque and beastly heads—a cliché of Safavid Iranian art.

The spatial and formal distortions here are quite different from the calm, elegant rationality of works by Mir Sayyid Ali and Abd as-Samad. This eccentricity is seen also in a small portrait of Abu'l-Ma'ali (Figure 11), a handsome, but arrogant, young courtier who was among Humayun's closest companions. As in the larger and more complicated scene, the illustration is animated by such traits as outlandishly rounded shoulders and an unbalanced posture. (There is controversy as to whether the portrait was made before or immediately following Humayun's death. In either case, the style is certainly that practiced at Humayun's court.)¹⁴

A closely related portrait, *Humayun with Two Hajjis* (Figure 12), by an artist strongly affected by Mulla Dust, also should be included among works of the period. Inscriptions name the personalities depicted. At the right two *hajjis* (men who have returned from the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca) are seen reciting the *fateha* (the first verse of the Qur'an) before Humayun. The emperor is attended by Lashkar Khan and the youthful Mirza Shahm Beg (both at the lower left), as well as Khushhal Beg. Similar occasions, with the recitation made for auspicious purposes, are recorded in contemporary texts. Before the expedition to Badakhshan, for example, Bayazid Biyat states that "Hazarat Khwajah Khan Mahmud arrived . . . [he] read the Fatihah to see H.M. [Humayun] off to Badakhshan."¹⁵



11. *Abu'l-Ma'ali*. By Dust Muhammad. Mughal, ca. 1555–1556.

Again the *Akbar-nama* gives us useful historical information. Mirza Shahm Beg and Khushhal Beg were among the corps of young nobles who served Humayun. Known as *qurchis*, the youths were drawn from the most noble families. Following Humayun's death, they became members of Akbar's personal bodyguard. This did not last long for Mirza Shahm. He had earlier become romantically involved with 'Ali-Quli Khan Shaibani, *Khanzaman*. The debauched and increasingly scandalous existence led by the two men was a topic of considerable concern at court. The historian Badaoni states that when Akbar heard of their misconduct, his "wrath knew no bounds" and he ordered both men to be punished.¹⁶ The episode was also recounted at length by Abu'l Fazl, who states that Shahm was murdered in 1559.¹⁷

Humayun with Two Hajjis has been dated to the early seventeenth century,¹⁸ but it is unlikely that Shahm would have been included in so intimate an imperial portrait after so great a disgrace. Moreover, the style is strongly influenced by Mulla Dust; the composition of the figure and the modeling of the



12. *Humayun with Two Hajjis*. By Bhagavati. Mughal, ca. 1556–1560.

robe is clearly derived from the style of his portrait of Abu'l-Ma'ali. Accordingly, the work must be contemporary with Humayun.

An inscription identifies the artist as Bhagavati.¹⁹ This is an Indian name, and although the work may have been painted in India, it is equally plausible that, just as Humayun's court at Kabul attracted artists from Iran, painters from the subcontinent may have come north to find employment. Artists and craftsmen were always eager to work for the most sympathetic and generous employer, while patrons viewed courtiers and artists from distant territories as testament to their own power and reputation. Here again there is a Timurid precedent. Describing Timur's capital, Babur had written: "In the town and suburbs of Samarkand are many fine buildings and gardens of Timur Beg . . . near the Iron Gate, he built a Friday Mosque of stone; on this worked many stone-cutters, brought from Hindustan."²⁰

All of the known images that can be related with some certainty to Humayun's patronage date from the end of his reign, although literary evidence exists for his artistic interests at an earlier date. Gulbadan Begum, the emperor's younger sister, discussed in her *Humayun-nama* a celebration that occurred soon after the accession and became known as the Mystic Feast. In describing the setting, the palace at Agra, she stated: "In the second room, called the House of Good Fortune, an oratory had been arranged, and books placed, and gilded pen-cases, and splendid portfolios, and entertaining picture-books [albums] written in beautiful character."²¹ A well-known reference in the memoirs of Jauhar, a court servant who accompanied Humayun during his years of exile from the subcontinent, describes an event in 1543: "the King undressed, and ordered his clothes to be washed, and in the meanwhile he wore his dressing gown; while thus sitting, a beautiful bird flew into the tent, the doors of which were immediately closed, and the bird caught; his Majesty then took a pair of scissors and cut some of the feathers off the animal; he then sent for a painter, and had a picture taken of the bird, and afterwards ordered it to be released."²²

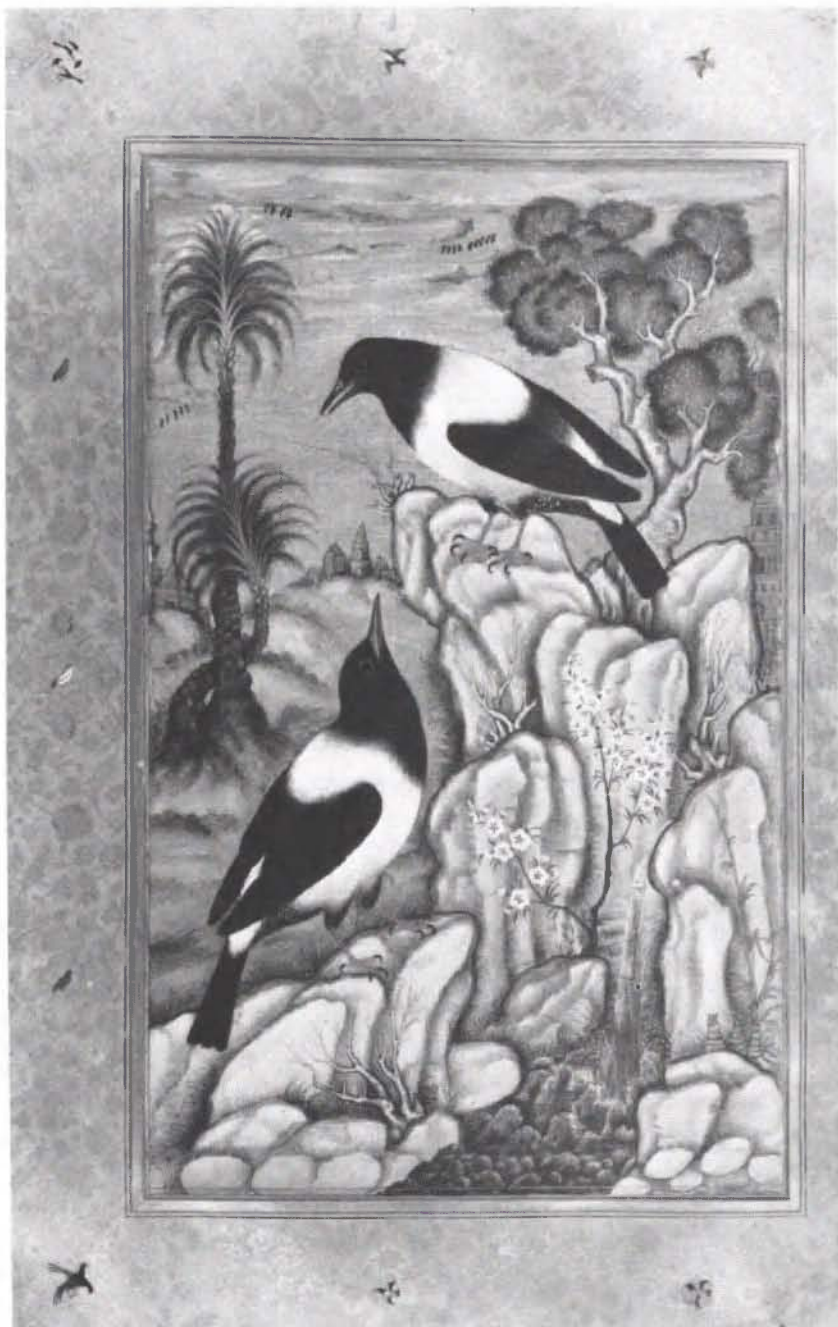
This reference is not surprising. The memoirs of Babur, Humayun's father, are full of careful verbal descriptions of the

flora and fauna he encountered on the subcontinent; the son's is a continuation of that interest. More significant, we must now acknowledge that the majority of Humayun period works either extant or known by literary reference are either portraits or descriptions of actual events. There can be no doubt that Humayun was interested in images of familiar people and historical happenings; Akbar built on an established tradition.

A painting of two birds, recently identified as *Two Rosy Pastors* (Figure 13) and among pages from an album formed for Jahangir, Akbar's son, has long been one of the earliest commonly accepted Akbari natural history studies.²³ Datable to about 1570, it should be seen in conjunction with an equally important image: *A Family of Cheetahs* (Figure 14). Both are products of that moment when the decorativeness and visual opulence of the Iranian style—shown in each work by the gold sky and the importance of the tree as a pattern against that gold—were being replaced by a Mughal interest in volume and spatial depth: note, for example, the intertwined tree trunks in the two scenes. The works, in fact, being of the same size and visual character, must have been made at the same moment, perhaps for an album of animal paintings.

Two Rosy Pastors, however, has a direct predecessor. A second painting exists of the same subject (Figure 15), though in an earlier and much rougher style. Here the sky is solid yellow, not gold, and the composition is even more limited spatially. In the later page, the repeated forms of the mountains, and their modeling, work organically to suggest living hills and rocks. The first *Two Rosy Pastors*, however, presents strong color contrasts and heavy black outlines that flatten the landscape forms and keep them on the surface. We are visually aware of pigment, rather than rock, and it seems wetter and much more freely applied.

A similar precedent exists for *A Family of Cheetahs*. That painting has been attributed to the artist Basawan, as has *Cow and Calf* (Figure 16), a smaller study on paper.²⁴ (The latter illustration should immediately recall *The Donkey in a Tiger's Skin*, Figure 7, from the *Tuti-nama* manuscript and also attributable to Basawan. Both paintings share the rapidly applied pigment which defines trees and grasses, although the stiffness of the animals in *Cow and Calf* may indicate that it is



13. *Two Rosy Pastors*. From the Berlin Album. Mughal, ca. 1570.



14. *A Family of Cheetahs*. Mughal, ca. 1570.



15. *Two Rosy Pastors*. Mughal, ca. 1550–1560.



16. *Cow and Calf*. From the Fitzwilliam Album. Mughal, ca. 1555–1560.



17. *A Chukor Partridge*. Mughal, ca. 1575.



18. *A Chukor Partridge*. From the Dorn Album. Mughal (or Iranian), ca. mid-16th century.

chronologically earlier in date.) *A Family of Cheetahs*, like the second *Two Rosy Pastors*, is executed with the tight, controlled technique that evolved later in the Akbar period. One conclusion we might safely make from all this is that by at least the first years of Akbar's reign—contemporary with the *Tuti-nama*—a tradition of animal and bird studies was well established.

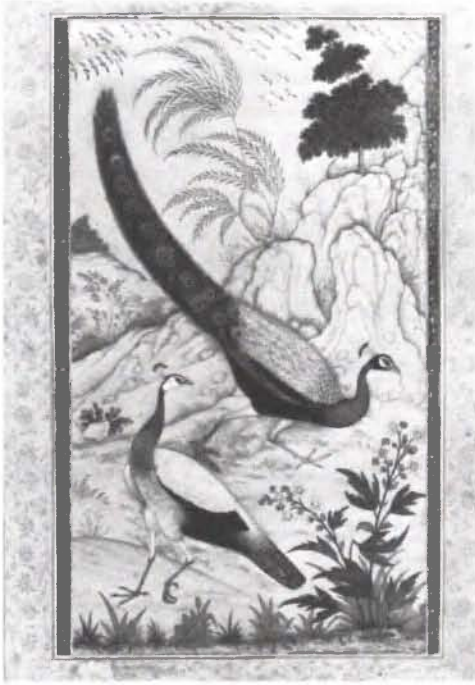
A painting of *A Chukor Partridge* (Figure 17) should also be mentioned among early Mughal bird studies. It is a later version of a painting (Figure 18) in the so-called Dorn Album in Leningrad. Stylistically, this latter work must precede both of the *Two Rosy Pastors*, for, like the early works of Abd as-Samad, it is based on Iranian taste. The partridge faces a tree defined by fluid, calligraphic and completely flat lines, and the foliage is arranged to make a lively pattern on the surface. The trees in the later *Two Rosy Pastors* (Figure 13), on the other hand, pull us into space and make us aware of its volume and depth.



19. *A Partridge in a Landscape*. Iran, probably later 14th century.

Mughal bird studies are certainly, if only partially, rooted in Safavid Iranian painting. The landscape forms in both depictions of partridges are similar to those seen in works of the second quarter of the sixteenth century; the great *Shah-nama* manuscript made for Shah Tahmasp is one example. Furthermore, one of the common visual clichés found throughout such Safavid manuscripts is a bird, or pair of birds—most frequently chukor partridges—placed on a distant mountain.²⁵ The careful, close-up depiction of birds, in which they become the subject of the painting, however, initially seems to be a Mughal innovation dating from this time. But the Safavid connection alone may not be sufficient to explain the origins of this important Mughal motif, and other works provide additional information.

An identical bird, set against quite different “Chinese” landscape forms, is found in a painting included in the great albums in the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul. *A Partridge in a Landscape* (Figure 19) is a further source for the bird studies under discussion.²⁶ Its probable mid-fourteenth-century date and Iranian provenance should not be taken as the beginning of an unbroken tradition of bird paintings in Iran, however. Within the Islamic world, the subject first became popular in



20. *Two Peafowl*. Attributed to Mansur. Mughal, ca. 1610.



21. *A Hundred Birds Admiring the Peacocks*. By Yin Hung. China, late 15th–early 16th century.



22. *Swans and Other Birds*. In the style of Lu Chi. China, ca. 1525.

Mughal India, not Timurid or early Safavid Iran. In fact, the many bird and flower paintings in the Topkapi albums directly reflect Chinese influence. (A major feature of the albums is the extensive artistic contact between Iran and China which they reveal. Chinese paintings were profusely copied and adapted by Iranian artists between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries.)²⁷ *A Partridge in a Landscape*, therefore, may indicate that Mughal painters had contact with works similar to those placed in the Topkapi albums and drew from this convenient source when asked to paint "natural history" subjects.²⁸

Later Mughal natural history paintings—the early seventeenth-century study *Two Peafowl* (Figure 20) is one of the greatest examples—are strongly influenced by Ming dynasty academic painting. The contact with China must have been direct. The peacocks seem to have walked out of *A Hundred Birds Admiring the Peacocks* (Figure 21), by Yin Hung, while the overall composition is directly comparable to *Swans and Other Birds* (Figure 22), a work dated about 1525 and in the style of Lu Chi. This latter work and *Two Peafowl* place forms against empty silk (or paper) and use simply defined ground lines and decoratively arranged vegetation.

Such works were not among those particularly coveted and protected by private collectors in China. They seem to have been taken from the country easily, sometimes by missionaries and travelers, or sent as ambassadorial gifts. *Swans and Other Birds* was among a small group of Chinese paintings included in an inventory (dated 1596) of the collections of Archduke Ferdinand II at Schloss Ambras in Innsbruck.²⁹ The actual date when the painting arrived in Europe is not known, but familiarity with similar works taken to India may have inspired the inscription written on the walls of what has long been thought to have been the emperor's bedroom at his capital city of Fathpur-Sikri. Datable to the 1570s, it says that the structure "is an object of envy for the highest heaven and the picture gallery of China. It is a lofty mansion: May it receive eternal approbation in everyone's eyes."³⁰ That there was some familiarity with Chinese art early in Akbar's rule is further confirmed by Abu'l Fazl's statement at the death of Daswanth, Akbar's favorite painter: "His paintings were not behind those of Bihzad [the most famous Timurid Iranian artist] and the painters of China."³¹

Motifs similar to these Mughal bird paintings, although in a different style, were basic to the repertoire of the Chinese decorative arts and appear during the sixteenth century on imported porcelains and textiles. Both of these media were known at the courts of Humayun and Akbar, as were Chinese paintings. The historian Khwandamir, writing in the 1530s of the marriage ceremonies of Hindal Mirza, stated that build-ings "were adorned with Turkish and European cloths . . . while the shops were so beautifully adorned as to be the envy of the Chinese picture galleries, and to excite the jealousy of the high heavens."³² Just as the Mughals found European works useful in their development of portraiture, so they may well have repeatedly drawn on China—first at second hand and then directly—for the quite different problems posed by the detailed depiction of birds and flowers. This possibility is further supported by the fact that all the early Mughal studies of birds which I have been discussing are on fabric rather than paper, a possible reference to the Chinese practice of painting on silk. So important was the silk mount as an element of the imagery that even a seventeenth-century Iranian copy of the study of the chukor partridge was painted on cloth.³³

This is not to suggest that the works were derivative in style. They do not seem Chinese any more than Mughal portraits could be mistaken for European images. Nevertheless, when asked to depict new motifs or subjects, Mughal artists were open to those imported attitudes and techniques so readily available in the libraries of Islamic bibliophiles and the courts and bazaars of India.

Humayun's interest in natural history imagery may have provoked a new responsiveness at the Mughal court to Iranian and Chinese depictions of birds. Babur, despite his clear verbal descriptions of natural history subjects in the *Babur-nama*, apparently did not commission animal paintings. Jahangir explicitly stated: "Although King Babar has described in his Memoirs the appearance and shapes of several animals, he had never ordered the painters to make pictures of them."³⁴ This claim, together with Jauhar's reference cited earlier, indicates that by the early seventeenth century, Humayun was considered to have originated Mughal animal portraiture. And the earliest of these small pictures on cloth, certainly the earliest

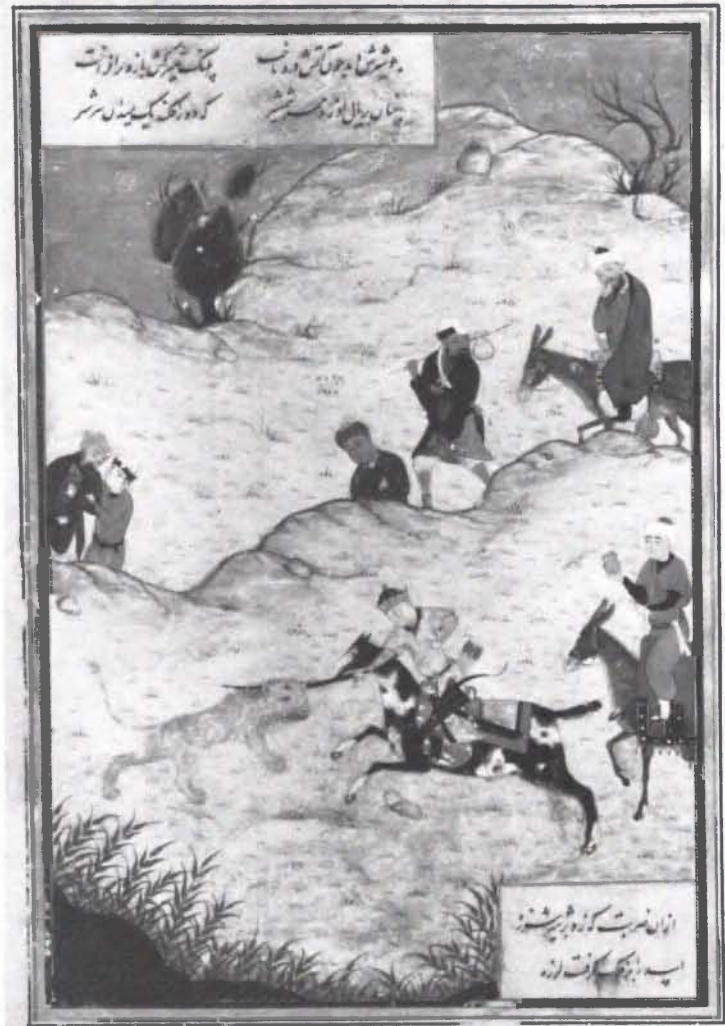
known Mughal natural history subjects, may date from the Humayun period.

Mughal naturalism has been greatly overstressed. Early animal imagery consists of variations on a theme, rather than new, innovative observations. The second painting of rosy pastors could easily have been derived from the first, while the several images of the partridge are paintings copying (or commenting on) paintings, rather than studies derived primarily from nature itself. The *Cow and Calf* (Figure 16) is no exploration of observed animals at all. The composition is one of the oldest and most frequently repeated in the repertoire of Hindu art; it appears as temple sculpture as early as the seventh century.³⁵ In creating a greater sense of the natural world, Mughal artists initially drew more heavily on art than on nature.

Prince Akbar Hunting a Nilgae (Figure 8) does depict an actual event, but this too happens through slight manipulation of a very familiar convention. Throughout the Near East hunting was a royal pastime and an elaborate iconography was developed. This early Mughal scene can be compared with *Mibr Kills a Ferocious Lion* (Figure 23), from a *Mibr u Mushtari* manuscript painted in 1525 at Bokhara, a provincial Iranian center of painting. Among important differences in the works, however, are the comparative lack of restraint and the diminished precision with which forms are defined in the Mughal scene, which thereby becomes far more exuberant. The freely sketched tree at the lower left, for example, has no counterpart in the Persian work.

The physical context of *Prince Akbar Hunting a Nilgae* is also significant. It was part of an extremely important album, of which only ten pages are presently known, the majority in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.³⁶ That the folios belong together is clear from the consistency of size, format, style, and marginal decoration. Because the anthology is unknown and unpublished, we will consider the folios as a group.

A *Court Scene* (Figure 24), is in a mid-sixteenth-century provincial style associated by inscriptional evidence with Bokhara. It is almost certainly representative of commercial workshop production at that center, for a great many virtually identical compositions have been found. More interesting



23. *Mibr Kills a Ferocious Lion*. From a *Mibr u Mushtari* manuscript. Iran, Bukhara, dated 1523.

pages in the Fitzwilliam Album are innovative variations of such stock images. Several make it evident that the ensemble of the volume was carefully thought out, for matching pairs of illustrations are on facing pages. Two such folios depicting angels (Figures 25 and 26) are prototypes for the angels that appear in both the *Tuti-nama* and *Hamza-nama* (see Figures 42 and 43). In those volumes, however, they are beings acting in the world of men, whereas in the Fitzwilliam Album they



24. *Court Scene*. From the Fitzwilliam Album. Iran, Bukhara, ca. 1550.

exist in a flattened, exclusively pictorial space. The arabesques in the background even continue onto the robes of the figures, holding them firmly to the picture surface—a detail antithetical to the spatial interests developed in even the earliest of Akbar's known commissions.

Two facing pages depict dancing girls (Figures 27 and 28), set against densely packed and absolutely flat decorative panels,³⁷ while separate pages include *Master and Pupil* (Figure 29), and *Two Youths* (Figure 30). The latter derives directly



25–26. *Two Angels*. Double page, from the Fitzwilliam Album. Mughal, ca. 1555–1560.





27–28. *Dancing Figures*. Double page, from the Fitzwilliam Album. Mughal, ca. 1555–1560.





29. *Master and Pupil*. From the Fitzwilliam Album. Mughal, ca. 1555–1560.

from works long termed Bokharan, such as *A Couple with an Attendant* (Figure 31); in each the male couple is a mirror image. In addition to the ruddier, livelier facial expressions that differentiate the most distinctive of the Fitzwilliam Album paintings from Bokharan style, landscape forms too are closer to later Mughal taste. In *Two Youths* the tree is created by a quick application of wet pigment, a technique unknown at Bokhara but further developed in the *Tuti-nama* volume.

Cow and Calf (Figure 16) was originally in this album, as was an important study of a *Doe and Fawn* (Figure 32). Like *Prince Akbar Hunting a Nilgae* (Figure 8), *Cow and Calf* is Indian in subject but not style. In fact, there is no awareness in the album of those overtly Indian stylistic traits that dominate the *Tuti-nama*, for example. It is possible that these illustrations were made before Indian influences were welcomed; and, further, that such innovative elements of the *Tuti-nama* as the free and sketchy application of color developed earlier and were brought to the project from elsewhere. The Fitzwilliam Album therefore must represent one of the component traditions blended into the *Tuti-nama* studios, rather than a result of the blend.

In general conception, *Prince Akbar Hunting a Nilgae* is very close to *A Prince Hunting with Falcons* (Figure 39), which will be attributed below to Abd as-Samad immediately after his arrival in India. Both works use mountains to define spatial cells of action and to avoid true recession. In each, the shapes of the narrative element are carefully defined and balanced to make a decorative surface design; there is no movement back from the picture plane. Since Abd as-Samad accompanied Humayun on his return to Delhi, and since we know of no tradition of painting past historical events until later in the century, there is little reason to doubt that *Prince Akbar Hunting a Nilgae* is contemporary with the event and painted by an artist working closely with the Iranian master. It also represents the earliest appearance of stylistic characteristics that became basic to the *Hamza-nama*. *Hamza Hunting a Tiger* (Figure 65) uses the same colors, spatial sense, and formulas for such details as mountains found in the earlier hunting scene, although in this later work they are handled with greater sophistication and familiarity.



30. *Two Youths*. From the Fitzwilliam Album. Mughal, ca. 1555–1560.

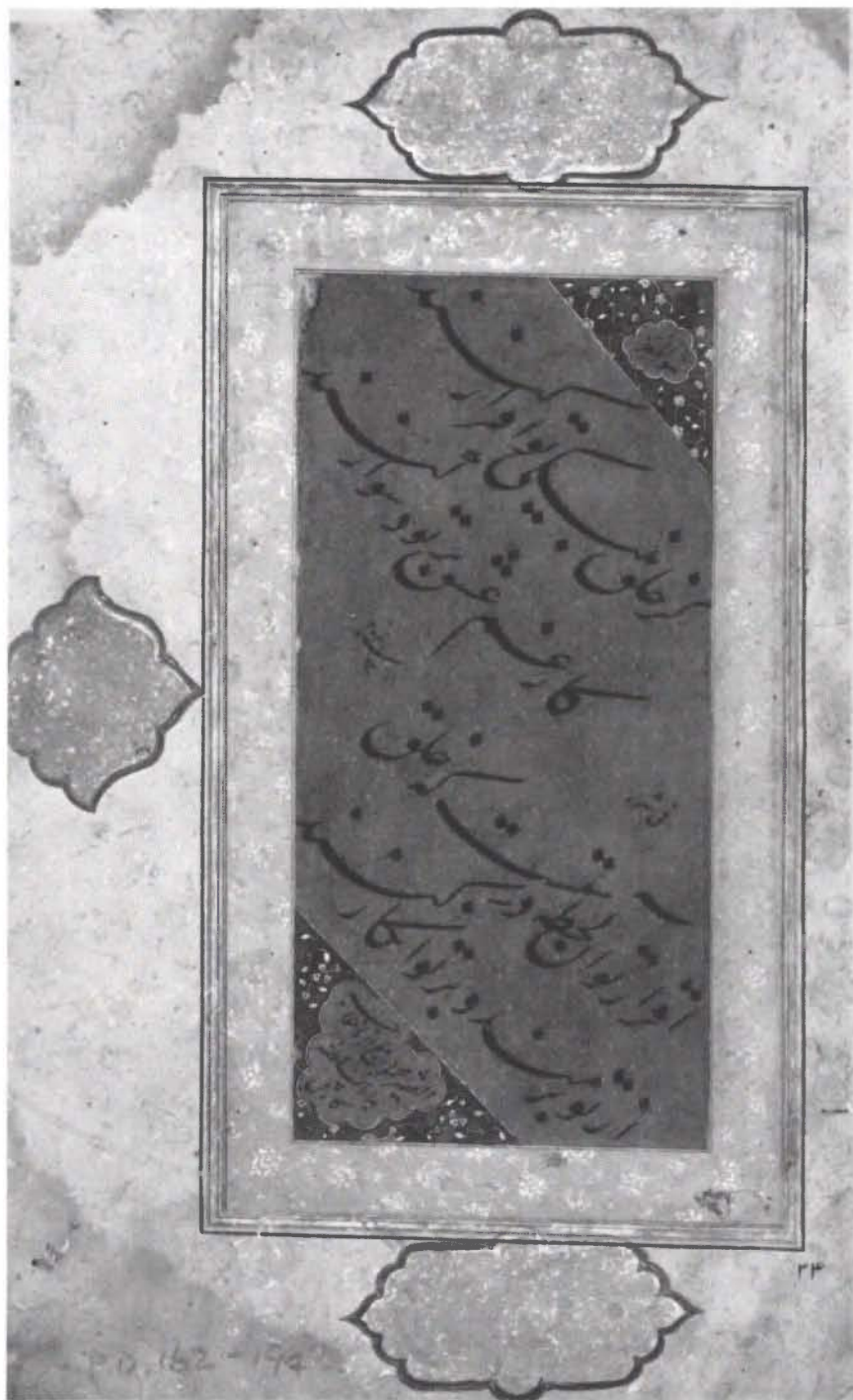


31. *A Couple with an Attendant*. Iran, Bukhara, ca. 1540.

Conforming to the usual album format, each illustration in the Fitzwilliam Album bears a passage of calligraphy on its reverse.³⁸ The recto (Figure 33) of the dancer illustrated in Figure 28 gives the important information that the calligraphy was written by Mahmud, son of Maulana Khwaja (*al-faqir Mahmud ibn Maulana Khwaja*), at Kabul in 1546–47 (953 H.). It therefore provides further evidence linking the contents of the album to the later years of Humayun's rule.



32. *Doe and Fawn*. From the Fitzwilliam Album. Mughal, ca. 1555–1560.



33. Calligraphy. From the Fitzwilliam Album. By Mahmud ibn Maulana Khwaja. Mughal (at Kabul), dated 1546-1547.

WHAT else do we know about patronage generally—or, more specifically, about who was interested in books and paintings—during the time of Humayun? In the *Babur-nama*, the memoirs of Humayun's father, that emperor recounts how, when he had raided "Ghazi Khan's book-room" after a battle in 1526, "some of the precious things found there I gave to Humayun, some sent to Kamran."³⁹ Kamran, Humayun's younger brother, was his political archrival. Because of Babur's reference we know that he was also a book collector.⁴⁰ Also, after Abd as-Samad and Dust Muhammad had come to Kabul to join Humayun, they briefly entered the service of Kamran at a moment when Humayun's future seemed bleak.⁴¹

Mirza Haidar Dughlat, a distant cousin of the Mughals of India and whose *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* is one of the most informative historical texts of the period, served both Humayun and Kamran. Although we have not learned that he was a patron or collector, Babur wrote that Haidar "has a deft hand in every thing, penmanship and painting [for example]; . . . moreover he is a born poet."⁴²

Mirza Haidar also served Rashid Khan of Kashgar, whose help Humayun sought when planning the recapture of Delhi. In 1552, to help cement an alliance, Humayun sent to Kashgar from Kabul a group of very major paintings—single images, it seems, not illustrations within manuscripts—including recent works by Abd as-Samad and Mir Sayyid Ali.⁴³ This is evidence of another major political figure interested in the arts, for Humayun would not have sent such important paintings without being convinced of the effect they would have. Such episodes show the importance of painting as a political tool, and each of these courts becomes a potential source for the stylistic innovations appearing in Mughal works.

Several books bear the seal of Hamida Banu Begum,⁴⁴ Humayun's wife and Akbar's mother. And, as we noted, the child Akbar studied painting with Abd as-Samad. It is even possible that Humayun too was a student of the master.⁴⁵ There can be no doubt that Humayun, like other major figures of his time, took painting and the establishment of library workshops for granted. Akbar's interest after his accession may have been particularly intense, but it was not new.

II

Akbar as Patron

IMAGES FOR THE
KING OF KINGS

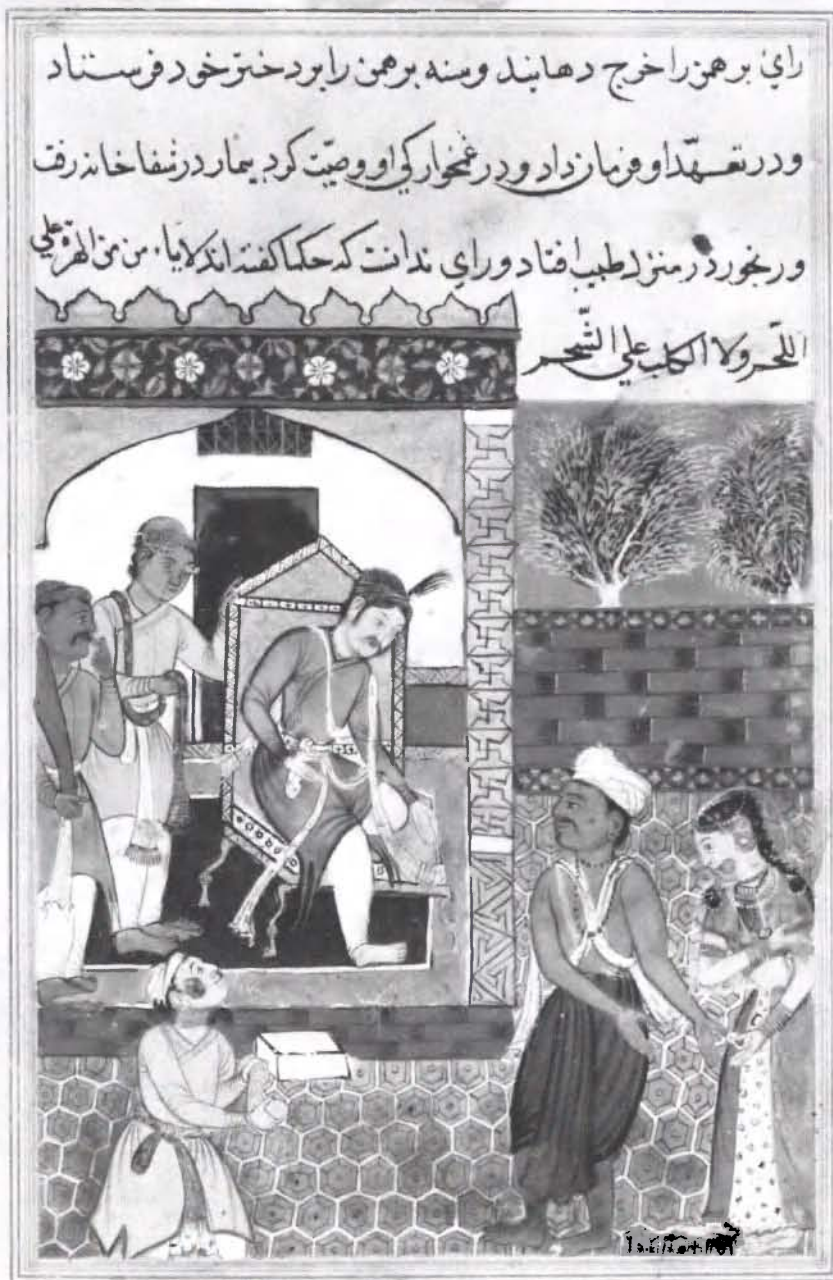
THE parrot hero of the *Tuti-nama*, attempting for the thirty-fifth time to prevent his mistress from being unfaithful to her absent husband, arouses her interest as she is leaving the house by reciting “The Story of the Brahman’s Falling in Love with the Daughter of the King of Babylon and How They Both Attain Their Desires through the Assistance of a Magician.” The narrative consists of fifty-two such stories, each recited for the same reason.

This particular tale tells of the love of a brahman and a princess, a hopeless affair which the brahman describes to a magician friend (Figure 34). The magician has a solution: he gives the brahman a magic bead by means of which, whenever he chooses, he can change himself into a woman. The magician then persuades the king to provide protection within the harem for a young woman whom he describes as his own daughter-in-law (Figure 35). The brahman, suitably transformed, is welcomed into the palace and there reveals his true identity to his beloved—the king’s daughter. The plot becomes more complicated when the king’s son sees an unfamiliar, but extraordinarily beautiful woman bathing in a palace pool (Figure 36) and, not realizing that she actually is a man, falls in love with her. Eventually the princess and her lover escape, at which point the magician returns to claim his “daughter-in-law” (Figure 37). The king, unable to produce her, offers him great riches instead. These the magician gives to the couple, who end the story both rich and free. So, concludes the parrot to his keeper, you too must have everything you want, your lover and your husband. However, as planned, the parrot has once again held his mistress’ attention throughout the night. Dawn breaks and her honor remains intact.¹



34. *The Brahman Recounts His Love*. From a *Tuti-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1556–1560.

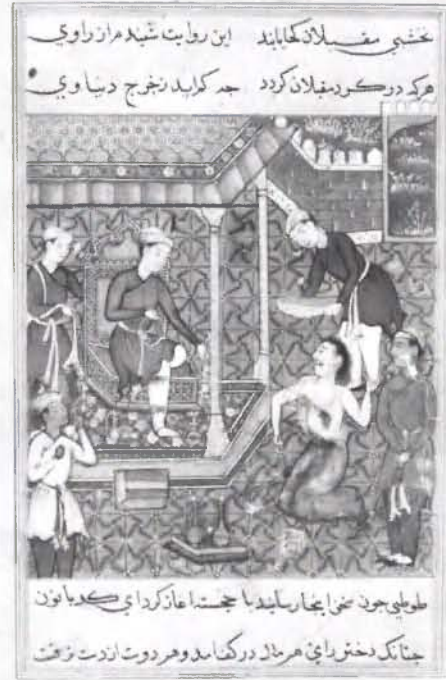
When the magician comes to reclaim his daughter-in-law, the king is depicted as a nondescript male type, his features indistinguishable from those of the youths attending him. Yet in the earlier illustration, in which the magician first brings the woman to the royal court, the king was shown with distinctive and quite different features. Enthroned before the magician, he is mustachioed and mature. The question there-



35. *The Magician, Disguised as a Brahman, Visits the King.* From a *Tuti-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1556–1560.



36. *The Son of the King Sees the Disguised Brahman Bathing.* From a *Tuti-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1556–1560.



37. *The Magician Returns to Claim His "Daughter-in-Law."* From a *Tuti-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1556–1560.

fore arises as to why the discrepancy. Nothing in the story warrants the change.

The image in Figure 35 is a portrait of Akbar, the earliest true portrait we know of the young emperor. The evidence for this lies in an illustration to an *Akbar-nama* manuscript in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, a volume usually thought to have been executed about 1590. The scene in question depicts an event of 1561, when dancing girls captured from Sultan Baz Bahadur were presented to the Mughal monarch (Figure 38). This occurred at about the time the *Tuti-nama* was being painted, and, despite three decades difference in style, Akbar's appearance is—as it ought to be—the same in each work.

This seems to be the only explicit visual reference to Akbar in the manuscript, but it is not inappropriate. The king of the



38. *Akbar Receives the Dancing Girls of Baz Bahadur*. From an *Akbar-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1590 or earlier.

tale is the ruler of Babylon, a site deeply imbedded in Iranian and Islamic legend.² It was viewed as the center of the world, and became part of the kingdom of Gayumars, the first man. The city was built by Hushang, the first carpenter and architect; and the *Akbar-nama* itself notes that Kenan, great-grandson of Adam, settled there. In that chronicle Abu'l Fazl states: "They ascribe to him the first establishment of houses and gardens." By Hermes of Babylon, he continues, "the sciences that had been lost in Noah's flood were resuscitated."³ And of course the city is also associated with the world-conquering Alexander the Great, known as the hero Iskandar in the great Iranian epic the *Shah-nama* (Book of Kings).

It is fitting, therefore, that Akbar be associated with Babylon, a symbol of creativity and power. Such visual allusions had long been the practice in Iranian tradition, just as the verbal encomiums of the Mughal historian Khwandamir had likened Humayun to the great Iranian heroes. In his *Qanun-i-Humayuni*, Khwandamir had written that the emperor "resembles Solomon . . . he is a Rustam . . . He is the second Ardeshir . . . powerful as a lion . . . the light of the eye of the Caesars . . . as resolute as Alexander the Great."⁴ But while such references draw on established Islamic tradition, the explicitness of the portraiture on the *Tuti-nama* page goes beyond any immediate precedents, including what we can identify as Humayun period in date. It also predicts the major, later emphasis of Mughal painting: images that enhance the political power and prestige of the imperial circle.

The *Tuti-nama* was probably painted within the first five years of Akbar's accession, and other images from this period may also depict the emperor. One is *A Prince Hunting with Falcons* (Figure 39), a work that is attributable to Abd as-Samad, despite an inscription at the upper right stating that it is by Mir Sayyid Ali.⁵ At the bottom left of the scene, a young man hands a falcon to its keeper, while an attendant kills the bird's victim. Throughout the Near East falconry was a particularly prestigious pastime, so the figures here are almost certainly royal. As was noted earlier though for other reasons, the painting is very close in style, composition, and sensibility to *Prince Akbar Hunting a Nilgae* (Figure 8). The attendants at the lower right of each illustration, for example, are depicted in



39. *A Prince Hunting with Falcons*. Attributed to Abd as-Samad. Mughal, ca. 1556–1560.

profile and are identical figural types, for in neither work are we looking at individualized portraiture.

There are, however, important differences. The Abd as-Samad page is more delicately drawn, the coloring is subtler, and the surface visually far richer—note especially the variety of shapes and textures in the mountains, or the use to which those landscape forms are put. The lines of the hills and rivers create intricately interweaving rhythms that lead our eyes over the picture surface and contrast with the clear shapes of the silhouetted hunters. The hills in *Prince Akbar Hunting a Nilgae*, though of the same basic shapes, more simply outline and define the distinct scenes of action. The roughness and resulting vigor of this earlier, fully colored scene implies student workmanship rather than a substantial difference in date. The two works are effectively contemporary, for *A Prince Hunting with Falcons* almost certainly depicts the young Emperor Akbar hawking, and should be dated soon after his accession in 1556.

Although *Prince Akbar Hunting a Nilgae* lacks the aesthetic finesse, miniaturism, and refinement of technical materials (such as pigments) of the scene by Abd as-Samad, its style becomes basic to the most important manuscript of the early Akbar period. This is the extraordinary *Hamza-nama*, in which there is a very comparable scene: *Hamza Hunting a Tiger* (Figure 65). The story is a fantastic adventure, based very loosely and only in part on the exploits of Hamza, an uncle of the Prophet Muhammad, who traveled throughout the world spreading the doctrines of Islam. The narrative tells of encounters with giants, demons, and dragons; of abductions and hair-raising chases; and of believers, as well as those who resisted the truth. It obviously appealed enormously to the young and energetic emperor, himself occupied with extending Islamic control over a predominantly Hindu country. The *Hamza-nama* was by no means universally popular. Babur considered it “one long far-fetched lie, opposed to sense and nature.”⁶ Akbar’s fascination with the story tells us something of his personality at the time. He might justifiably have been entertained by its parallels with his own life.

The manuscript originally contained 1400 illustrations, almost all painted on sheets of paper glued to a large cloth

surface. (Paper of the requisite size and strength was not yet available.) These were arranged in fourteen volumes of equal size, each about 27 inches high and 20 inches wide. Mir 'Ala-al-Daula Qazwini, a contemporary historian, wrote that the *Hamza-nama* took fourteen years to complete and that for half that time Mir Sayyid Ali was the director of the project. His responsibilities would have included the choice of episodes to be depicted and the assignment of the artists appropriate to each. We also learn that thirty painters were among the one hundred artists and artisans employed on the manuscript.⁷

At the end of seven years, however, only four volumes had been completed, and, perhaps for this reason, Mir Sayyid Ali was replaced as head of the workshops by Abd as-Samad. Qazwini continues that the new director "greatly endeavored to bring the work to completion and also notably reduced the expenditure."⁸ Abd as-Samad managed to finish ten volumes in the same time that Mir Sayyid Ali completed four. The later pages are the most exciting and innovative in the work, clear testament to the quality of Abd as-Samad's artistic direction as well as to his organizational ability. However, no *Hamza-nama* illustrations are signed (although several can be attributed), and no pages have yet been ascribed successfully to the hand of either director.

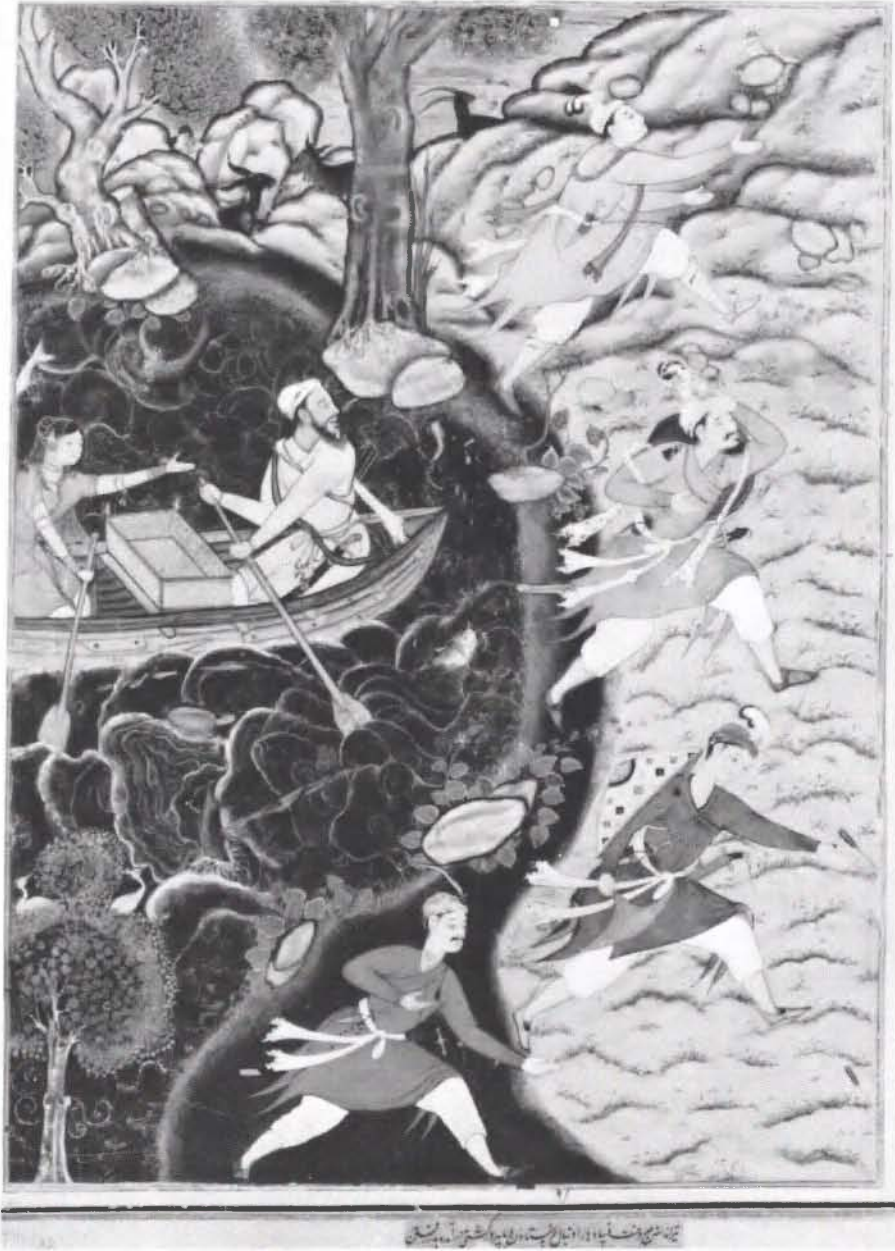
In the very earliest pages made for the work, the format was experimental; images and text are sometimes included on the same page, and there even are illustrations on both sides of a folio. For the majority of the pages, however, illustrations completely filled one folio side, with the text written on the reverse. Despite their large size, the volumes may have been bound, for text and related illustrations are on facing pages.

Like many thrillers, and like the *Tuti-nama*, the *Hamza-nama* consists of a continuous series of romantic interludes, threatening events, narrow escapes, and violent acts. The paintings are not occasional adornments to the text, but integral revelations of the narrative, and the storytelling function of the scenes is stressed through action, gesture, and facial expression. Two additional illustrations allow us to be more specific about the strength of the manuscript as a whole.

Zumurrad Shah Aloft (Figure 40) shows a fire-worshipping giant and his followers riding through the sky on enchanted



40. *Zumurrad Shah Aloft*. From a *Hamza-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1562–1577.



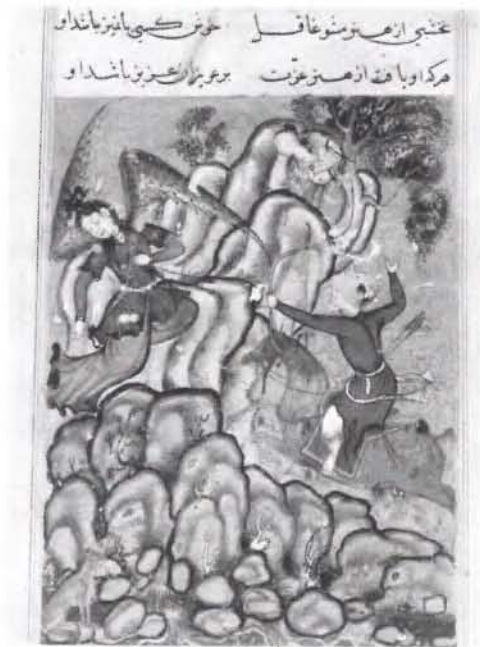
41. *Mibrdukht and Her Abductors*. From a *Hamza-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca 1562–1577.

clay waterpots. *Mihrdukht and Her Abductors* (Figure 41) illustrates a tale in which the great archer and heroine searches for her lost lover, Hamza's son, whom she believes to have been kidnapped. She heads for an island where she hopes to find him, but four youths jump into her boat and attempt to abduct her. She calmly states that four are too many, but that she will go off with whichever of the boys returns with an arrow that she will shoot onto the island. They reach land, she draws her bow, and the youths race eagerly away; at which point, ordering her boatman to row her back to the mainland, she escapes.

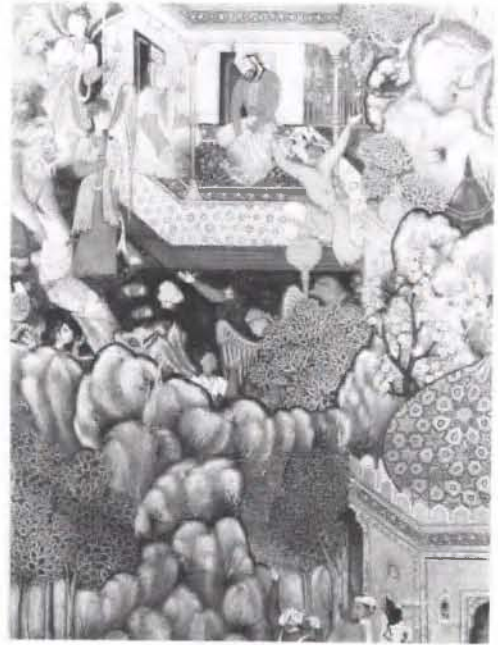
Each of these illustrations tells its story superbly and clearly. The major elements of the narrative are isolated and dominate the scene; because of this, the works distinguish themselves from the established Iranian court style. Each composition is manipulated to reinforce the specific drama. *Mihrdukht and Her Abductors* is taut and controlled—the line of the bank like a drawn bow, and the four attackers as sharp and angular as arrows. Zumurrad Shah, on the contrary, is placed in a weightless and effervescent composition, full of round and billowing shapes. Here, appropriately, the painter stresses space: note the figure at the lower left, looking down into the waterpot, making us particularly aware of the volume of air it contains.

Although specific attributions to Mir Sayyid Ali and Abd as-Samad in either the *Tuti-nama* or *Hamza-nama* have not been successfully made, their influence is felt in both.⁹ *The Third Suitor Shoots the Wicked Fairy* (Figure 42), from the *Tuti-nama*, is clearly a precursor of *The Fairies Call on Hamza to Kill the Dragon* (Figure 43), from the *Hamza-nama*. Dark tonalities and dominant mountains distinguish each work from others in the two manuscripts, and link both scenes to *Jamshid Writing on a Rock* (Figure 44), a considerably later, but signed, painting by Abd as-Samad. That artist's influence is particularly clear in many illustrations from the two volumes, and his style remains remarkably consistent throughout his long career.

The development of early Mughal painting reveals the increased control the directors of the imperial workshops exerted. The *Tuti-nama* has no unity of style and only modest unity of intention; it is as if each painter decided for himself



42. *The Third Suitor Shoots the Wicked Fairy.* From a *Tuti-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1556–1560.



43. *The Fairies Call on Hamza to Kill the Dragon.* From a *Hamza-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1562–1577.

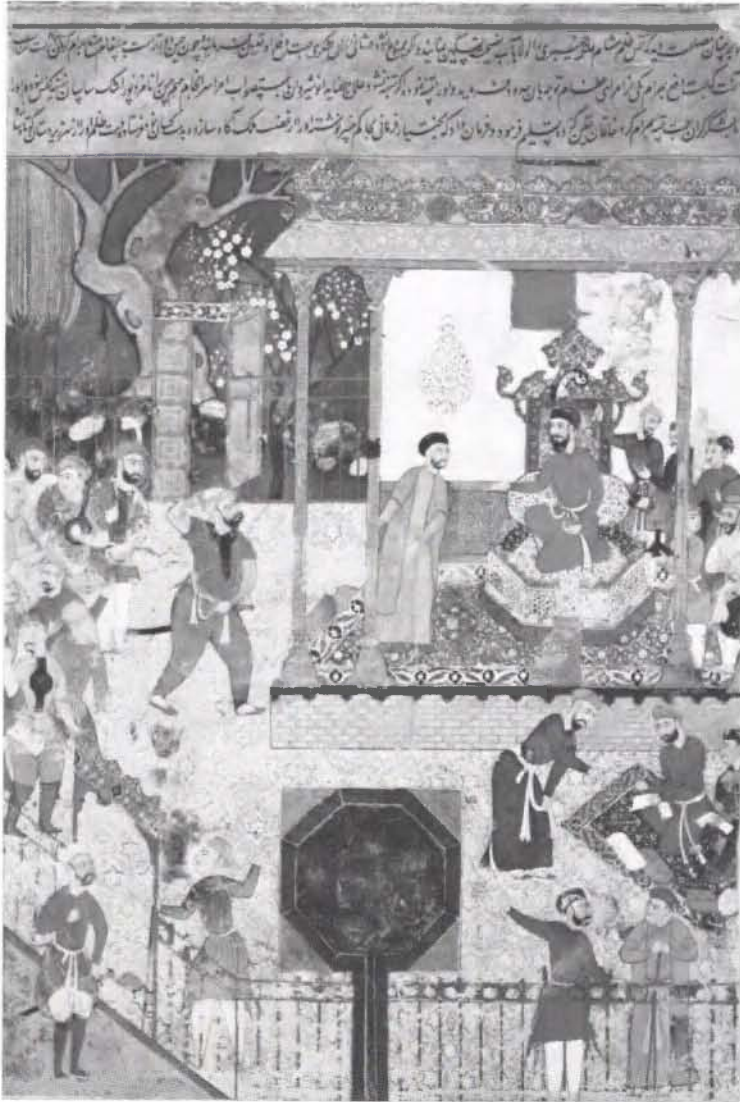


44. *Jamshid Writing on the Rock.* By Abd as-Samad. From a *Jahangir Album*. Mughal, ca. 1588.

how to compose and execute his assigned episode. The manuscript is important precisely because it exhibits the diversity of artistic attitudes and sources which initially existed within the workshops. The *Hamza-nama*, however, especially after its first four volumes, is highly focused in style, composition, format, and attitude toward narrative. Its illustrations show painters constantly adjusting their individual styles to produce a coherent and unified overall effect. Because this could have occurred only as the result of central control and coordination, and because the influence of Abd as-Samad, the project director, is so pervasive within the volume, it becomes increasingly clear that he is the dominant figure in the manuscript's evolution. It is also clear that the Safavid style in which he was trained was not the only Iranian constituent of Akbari painting.

Several illustrations from the *Hamza-nama* are derived from a quite different Iranian tradition. The first four books, done under the superintendence of Mir Sayyid Ali, contain several scenes obviously painted by artists from Bokhara. Mir Sayyid Ali and Abd as-Samad had both worked for Shah Tahmasp, whose Safavid dynasty centered at Tabriz had replaced the Timurids—Akbar's ancestors—in 1502. Bokhara, on the other hand, had become a refuge for Timurid artists and craftsmen, many of whom had been taken from the old Timurid capital at Herat by invading Uzbek Turks. Bokhara, near Samarkand, was closely associated with Timur. That it had been conquered by the Uzbeks was unacceptable to the Mughals, and Uzbek-Mughal rivalry is an important element of the Akbar period.

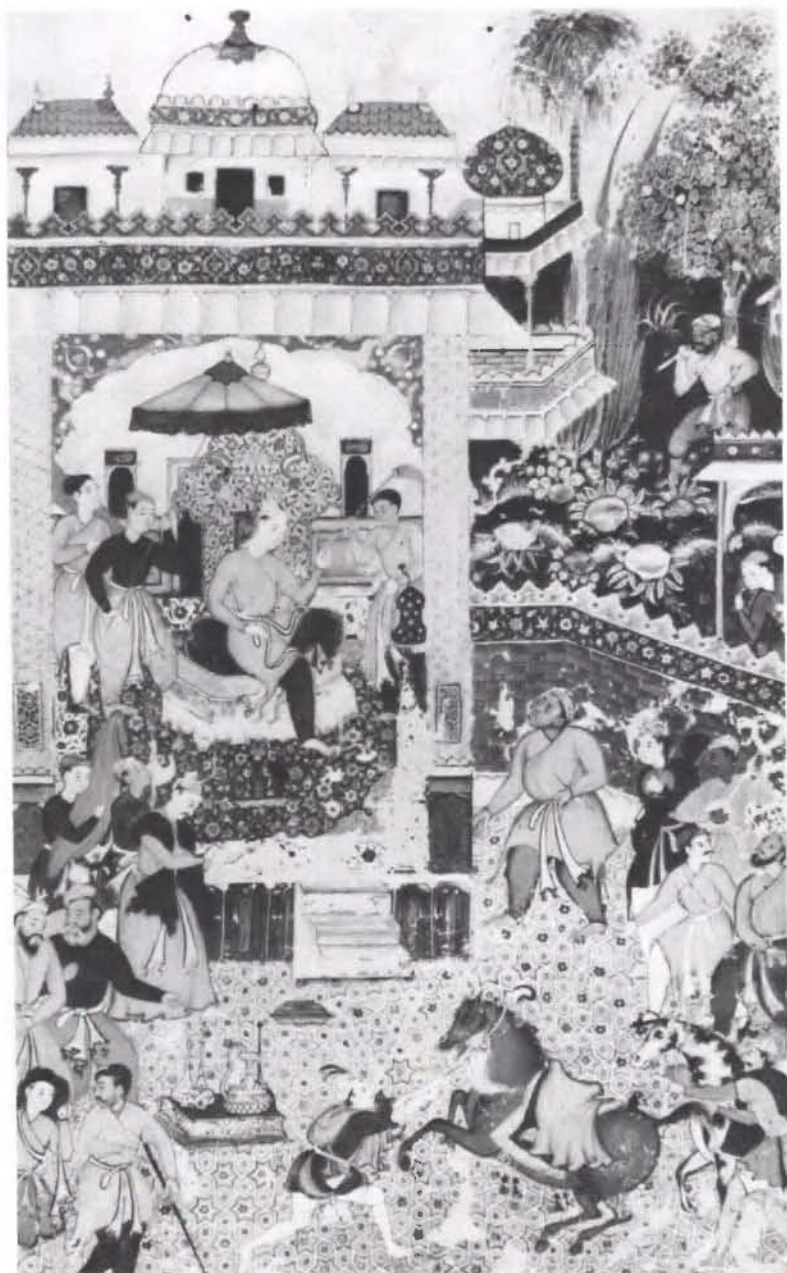
The Timurid style lingered at Bokhara. It can be defined in part by *Anushirwan Sends His General to Battle the Turks* (Figure 45), from the fourth volume of the *Hamza-nama*, a painting that is otherwise of little artistic interest. As in the court scene from the Fitzwilliam Album (Figure 24), the composition is flat and broken into clearly defined, self-contained, and often rectangular compartments. Patterns are intricate but vivid; rugs, tile floors, and even pools of water (as here) are inevitably seen from a bird's-eye view to enhance their ornamental strength. Unlike the Safavid style, the effect is usually static.¹⁰ This illustration, though not typical of the majority of the ones in the *Hamza-nama*, is nonetheless important as evidence



45. Anushirwan Sends His General to Battle the Turks. From a *Hamza-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1562–1565.

of the continuing presence of Bokharan artists and ideas at the Mughal court.

The earliest Akbari manuscript with an inscription giving its date of execution is the *Deval Devi Khidr Khan* of 1567–68 (Figure 46). This is the first of three well-known manuscripts contemporary with the *Hamza-nama* that I will discuss. Unlike



46. *Court Scene*. From a *Deval Devi Khidr Khan* manuscript. Mughal, dated 1567–1568.

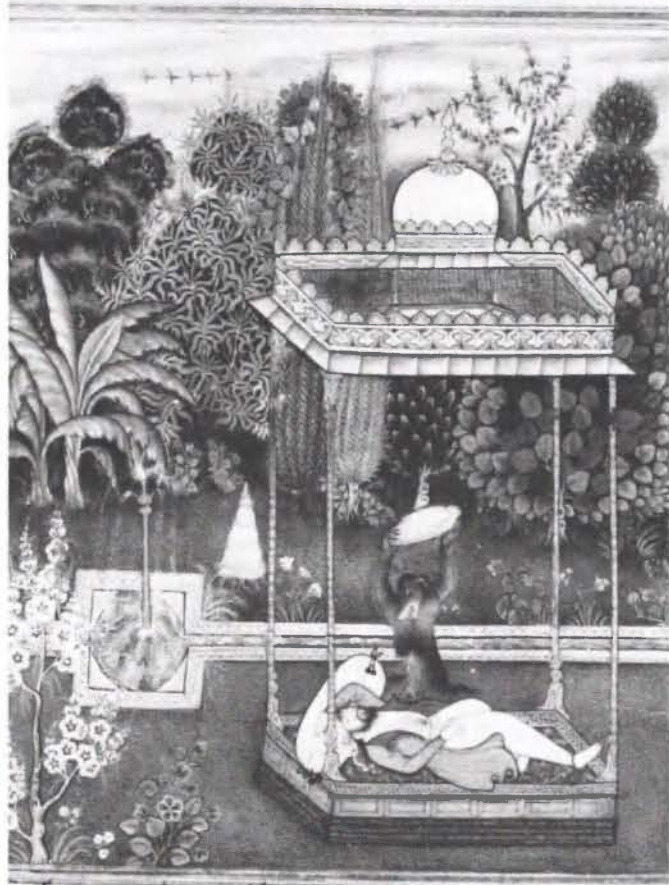
that enormous production, all are volumes that can be held in the hand.

The *Deval Devi Khidr Khan* is a romance by Amir Khusrau Dihlavi (1253–1325), one of the greatest Indian Muslim poets. It tells of the love of a Khalji dynasty emperor for a Gujarati princess. The compositions of the book's two illustrations, presumably of the same date, are typically Bokharan, with figures in a pavilion surrounded by a tiled courtyard and distant garden. But the new Mughal interest in action is clear in such details as the rearing horse or the billowing garments of the groom. Less overtly dramatic than the majority of *Hamza-nama* illustrations, which generally avoided this archetypal composition, the scene is closer to mainstream Iranian taste, and the illustrations parallel more conservative pages of the larger manuscript with which it was contemporary. They also show one manner by which Bokharan style could be manipulated to accord with the new Mughal taste.

A second dated manuscript, the *Anwar-i-Subaili* (Lights of Canopus) of 1570, contains twenty-seven illustrations for a Persian translation of the Sanskrit Indian tales from which Aesop's fables were derived (Figures 47 and 48). Its format is small and thus far more intimate than that of the *Hamza-nama*; yet this volume overall is considerably more innovative than the *Deval Devi Khidr Khan*. The forms are strongly defined, the narrative clearly emphasized, and one is initially aware of vivid shapes and patterns (note the vegetation in *The Monkey's Attack*, Figure 47). This increases the quickness of our response. The fact that the two manuscripts are virtually contemporary is a matter to which I will return. They do not, after all, seem to have much in common.

Brushstrokes and the texture of the pigment are visible, especially in the skies of several folios of the *Anwar-i-Subaili*, and the forms are sometimes set against blank, unpainted paper. Scenes spill out beyond the carefully indicated rectangular boundaries of the text; the text in fact often looks obtrusive, so dominant is the role of the illustrations. This technical informality gives energy, vitality, and a sense of spontaneous decision—rather than of preplanned compositions and colors, as in Bokharan work. Although its far smaller size imposes a different character on the volume, the *Anwar-i-Subaili* is scarcely less vital and energetic than the *Hamza-nama*.

ز غرث و کبک و آهنگی خرپن آشفته شد و پستی بقدر پست من برداشته و قضا
 آنکه یکس میکشد بروی و همان چاره زو یکس نرا از نیب آن پستک آسپنی سید
 اما سر باغبان با خاک یکسان شد و از پنجاهست که بزرگان گفت اند بیت
 که بجز حال دشمن و دانا بهتر از دو پستی که نماند است



و این مثل برای آن ایراد کردم که دو پستی تو همان چپه ده که سر در معرض کف
 باشد و پسته خندک بلاراد فک کرد و حیت صحبت ابلهان جو دیک نمی آید

47. *The Monkey's Attack*. From an *Anwar-i-Subahi* manuscript. Mughal, dated 1570.



48. A Hawking Party. Attributed to Shahm. From an *Anwar-i-Subaili* manuscript. Mughal, dated 1570.

Just how far the most progressive Mughal artists had departed from Bokharan formulas can be seen by comparing *The Monkey's Attack* with the second page reproduced from the same manuscript. This is one of two illustrations in the book that are again in an almost pure Bokharan style, which is seen best in the characteristic flatness of the landscape. This work is completely unrelated to the consistent stylistic interests elsewhere in the volume, and one wonders if such images might have been included in imperial manuscripts precisely because the artists were so recognizably Bokharan. Their presence would thus have been a reference to Timur and to the Mughal inheritance of his artistic traditions.

The best work summarizing the development of Mughal painting until this period is the third of the manuscripts datable to circa 1570: a volume known as *Tilasm and Zodiac*. Rather than a true manuscript, where text and illustrations are equally important, this is an album of pictures. The paintings, cut from their original pages, have been remounted. Full-page illustrations of the zodiacal signs alternate with a series of talismanic prescriptions—six per page. These small images, which describe such things as magic charms and cures for diseases, develop directly out of the *Tuti-nama* tradition, with strong regional Indian influences. *Aquarius* (Figure 49) introduces quite different visual problems. Space is deep and continuous, and background forms diminish in size. This, plus the obviously European dress of the distant figures, is strong evidence of European influence already well assimilated. The group of pictures is poised on the borderline between adherence to established formulas and true innovation; it recalls the *Tuti-nama* at the same time that it predicts later poetical and historical manuscript styles.

Even for these illustrations, however, the artists often drew on a general repertoire of forms. A painting of a *Man with a Trumpet* (Figure 50) is familiar from the various versions of the *'Aj'aib al-Makhlūqat* (Wonders of Creation and the Oddities of Existence), a thirteenth-century text by Qazwini that was continually copied and illustrated. (See, for example, Figure 51, *The Archangel Israfil*.) Other compositions have counterparts in different contemporary and earlier works. In the zodiacal depiction of *Aquarius*, for example, the figure seated under the



49. *Aquarius*. From a *Tilasm and Zodiac* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1567–1570.



50. *Man with a Trumpet*. From a *Tilasm and Zodiac* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1567–1570.



51. *The Archangel Israfil*. From an *Aj'aib al-Makbluqat* manuscript. Iraq, late 14th century.

canopy, together with the elderly standing courtier and the two men he introduces, are all repeated in an important *Presentation Scene* (Figure 52), which must date from about 1565.¹¹ Like *Prince Akbar Hunting a Nilgae* (Figure 8), this court scene seems to record an actual event, although it has not yet been identified. However, as in the paintings of birds already discussed, we see that here too the increased production demanded in Akbar's workshops forced painters to reuse and adapt motifs and compositions from any useful source.

BY THE late 1560s production in the imperial workshops was profuse and varied. Each of the manuscripts already mentioned has a very distinctive character; it would be difficult to confuse illustrations for one book with those of another. There is little evidence for any overall unity, however. Following the *Tuti-nama*, each separate project had a coherent stylistic direction,



52. *Presentation Scene*. Mughal, ca. 1565.

but there seems to have been no coordination at a higher level. This suggests that although the creation of each manuscript was carefully administered, the workshops were not yet under strong central control.

Between about 1570 and the early 1580s—the years when the emperor was in residence at his new capital at Fathpur-Sikri—few major manuscript projects other than final work on the *Hamza-nama* can be reliably dated. It is possible that accelerated demands for the completion of that manuscript, together with the building of the new city, took artistic precedence.

In the early 1580s, however, datable material again becomes abundant. There are wall paintings known from Fathpur-Sikri, but they are in too damaged a condition to be useful as documentary evidence. The fragments that exist can be divided into three categories: narrative (Figure 53); figural, that is, the depiction of large and frequently symbolic figures outside a narrative context; and decorative, which are primarily floral (Figure 54). As we might expect, the narrative scenes have direct counterparts in the *Hamza-nama* illustrations, while the floral panels derive from Bokharan motifs.¹²

A painting on cloth, showing *A Prince Riding an Elephant* (Figure 55), is contemporary with both the Fathpur-Sikri fragments and illustrations for the *Hamza-nama*. The scene has been divided into two parts; in a recent reconstruction of the composition, it was proposed that the work would have been hung in a tent, a portable counterpart to the wall paintings in the sandstone palaces of Agra and Fathpur-Sikri.¹³ An illustration of Krishna enthroned within a tent encampment (Figure 57), from the Jaipur *Razm-nama* manuscript, shows painted cloths used in this way.

The upper half of *A Prince Riding an Elephant*—the portion reproduced here—immediately links the work to *Departure for a Hunt* (Figure 56), a superb, but little known *Hamza-nama* page. The compositions are almost identical, although the reconstructed scene probably depicts a historical rather than a literary event. In any case, it is clear that the kinds of images found in the *Hamza-nama* decorated the walls of both stone and cloth buildings. Imagery seen in manuscripts was thus familiar in quite different contexts.



53. Unidentified scene. Wall-painting from the "House of Miriam," Fathpur-Sikri. Mughal, ca. 1570.



54. Landscape scene. Wall-painting from the "House of Miriam," Fathpur-Sikri. Mughal, ca. 1570.



55. *A Prince Riding an Elephant* (upper half). Mughal, ca. 1570.



56. *Departure for a Hunt*. From a *Hamza-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1562–1577.



57. *Krishna Enthroned*. From a *Razm-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1582–1586.

MUGHAL painting easily could have evolved as yet another provincial (or Indianized) variant of the metropolitan Iranian style, but it did not. The eager acceptance by Mughal workshops of painters from different and even antithetical traditions is not sufficient explanation, for that had happened already in pre-Mughal traditions. That traits from a wide variety of sources were investigated and studied with enthusiastic open-mindedness, however, was new to Islamic tradition, as was the success with which they were often synthesized. This has been credited to Akbar's own innovative interest in the various social and religious communities with which he came into contact and can explain the quantity of imagery available to his artists. It is also evidence of the deep-seated Indian ability to absorb established precedent, however unfamiliar. Both Humayun and Akbar supported artistic experimentation, but it was their painters who chose appropriate models and effected the transformation.

Akbar was interested in overseeing the work of his artists. Abu'l Fazl states: "The works of all painters are weekly laid before His Majesty by the Daroghas and the clerks; he then confers rewards according to excellence of workmanship, or increases the monthly salaries."¹⁴ It may be important that there were intermediaries between the patron and the painter at this time, although later references indicate that Jahangir was presented with works by the artists themselves. So far little direct evidence either supports or refutes claims that Akbar was involved in every aspect of the execution of works of art. Nonetheless, the emperor's evolution as both patron and person is crucial to a comprehension of the style and its development.

In 1561, six years after Akbar's accession to the throne, his ambitious regent, Bairam Khan, was murdered by an imperialist faction, thus removing a challenge to the young emperor's control of the country. Politically, Akbar had reached maturity. He wanted his personal power to be unassailable, which meant overcoming the antagonism of neighboring Hindu kingdoms. Some of these states (like Amber, now more familiar as Jaipur) quickly acknowledged imperial overlordship and arranged formal allegiance and even intermarriages; such states grew and prospered as the rulers were given important roles within the Mughal administrative system.

By 1568 the great Rajput fortress at Chitor, home of the Ranas of Mewar, was defeated by imperial armies. This was followed a year later by the fall of nearby Rinthambhor Fort. (That the events were considered of special importance is proved by their inclusion in all the known contemporary illustrated copies of Akbar's biography; see, for example, Figures 80 and 81.) These conquests at least nominally secured the western regions of north India. Gujarat came under Mughal domination in 1573, and Bengal, to the east, in 1576. Akbar's political control of the northern regions of the subcontinent was virtually unchallenged from the late 1570s, and the extent of his kingdom would become greater than that of any prior Muslim ruler of India.

A second major imperial concern throughout the 1560s was dynastic succession. Akbar was first married in 1551, but it was not until 1569, when he was in his late twenties, that a son and heir was born. Abu'l Fazl hyperbolically announced the event by writing:

The flower of joy bloomed in the glorious garden
Fruit appeared on the plant of realm and religion.¹⁵

The prince was named Salim, after Shaikh Salim Chishti, a Muslim holy man who had predicted his safe birth. Two more sons, Sultan Murad and Sultan Daniyal, were born in the next three years; by the middle 1570s dynastic security seemed assured. In thanks, Akbar built the new capital city and palace on the sandstone ridge at Fathpur-Sikri, site of the saint's hermitage, twenty-three miles from Agra. These two cities became the center of his world, and it was here that most of the manuscripts I have been discussing were created.

With the political and dynastic foundations to his imperial ambitions finally secured, Akbar turned increasingly to intellectual and personal concerns. The emperor relished the variety of people he encountered throughout his kingdom. On one Kiplingesque occasion, he even left the palace in disguise to mingle with his subjects: "One night when there was a very large assemblage . . . near Agra he according to his excellent habit crossed over to it under a special disguise. He was contemplating the various sorts of humanity when 'suddenly a vagabond recognized me and said so to others. When I became

aware of this I without the least delay or hesitation rolled my eyes and squinted and so made a wonderful change in my appearance . . . When these good folks looked at me they, on account of the change in my appearance could not recognize me, and said so to one another, "These are not the eyes and features of the king." I quietly came away from them and went to my palace.' "16

This fascination with and respect for people made Akbar both sympathetic to and troubled by the range of opposing religious viewpoints which he encountered. At Fathpur-Sikri, in 1575, he established the *Ibadat Khana* (House of Worship), where prominent men of different beliefs were invited to come together to articulate and discuss their differences. "He, in his ample search after truth . . . laid the foundations of a noble seat for intellectual meetings . . . His sole and sublime idea was that . . . the masters of science and ethics, and the devotees of piety and contemplation, be tested, the principles of faiths and creeds be examined, religions be investigated, and the proofs and evidences for each be considered, and the pure gold and the alloy be separated from evil commixture. In a short space of time a beautiful, detached building was erected, and the fraudulent ventures of impostures put to sleep in the privy chamber of contempt. A noble palace was provided for the spiritual world, and the pillars of Divine knowledge rose high."17

Shia and Sunni Muslims, Sufi mystics, Jains, Hindus, Zoroastrians, Christians, and Jews were among those who eventually participated in these discussions, which in turn forced Akbar to further question his own exclusive and traditional affiliation to Islam. His uncertainty, together with the creation of a forum to explore his own doubts and investigate alternate approaches, was anathema to the orthodox Muslim community.

No mere dilettante, Akbar took such matters seriously and was in deep personal turmoil during the later 1570s. This was climaxed by an event in 1579, following the kill during a hunting expedition. He had an ecstatic vision. "A sublime joy took possession of his bodily frame," Abu'l Fazl related. "The attraction of the cognition of God cast its ray."18 Akbar felt that he had directly encountered the Unity that animated the

Universe. This pivotal point of his life encouraged Akbar to issue the Decree of Infallibility, by which he proclaimed himself the ultimate arbiter in any dispute over the interpretation of religious doctrine. The decree increased antagonism to his rule among the orthodox, who claimed that he believed himself to be a Prophet. In 1582 Akbar announced the establishment of a new and official religious system, the *Din-ilahi* (Divine Faith), a series of rites and ordinances drawn from the various traditions that he had investigated. The Infallibility Decree and the Divine Faith gave Akbar an intellectual and spiritual security comparable to the dynastic and political stability achieved by the mid-1570s. And once again he moved in a new direction, symbolized by his abandonment of Fathpur-Sikri and Agra in 1585.

WHAT kinds of changes are found in the arts during the early 1580s? One gauge is the important shift in the character of the texts chosen for illustration. The decade ending about 1570 had been dominated by the *Tuti-nama* and *Hamza-nama* manuscripts. These were adventure stories, with little grounding in reality, while the *Anwar-i-Suhaili* and *Deval Devi Khidr Khan* were literary narratives. About 1580, with the *Hamza-nama* finally completed, Akbar began to commission historical studies, and texts to explain "the rational contents" of various religions.¹⁹ This was also the year of the arrival of the first Jesuit mission to the Mughal court. With them the Fathers brought, from their center at Goa, Christopher Plantin's *Royal Polyglot Bible*, an eight-volume work printed a few years earlier in Antwerp and illustrated by engravings (Figure 58). Although we no longer believe that these were the first European works to have come to Akbar's attention, the arrival of the books—which were rapidly succeeded by a variety of northern European prints—and the almost continuous presence of Europeans at the capital sparked an intensive interest in European compositions and techniques. The Bible itself was the source for several inventive studies. Figures in drawings by Basawan and his son Manohar are adapted from motifs found on the double-page frontispiece (Figure 59, for example).²⁰

Beginning about 1580, Akbar commissioned a series of



58. Frontispiece from the *Royal Polyglot Bible*. Printed by Christopher Plantin. Antwerp, 1568–1572.

historical studies: some were new compositions, such as the *Tarikh-i-Alfi*, a history of the first thousand years of Islam; others were translations of such established texts as the *Babur-nama*. The first new project to be completed was probably the *Timur-nama*, a history of Timur and his descendants down to Akbar himself. This was no casual choice of subject. The Mughals were always conscious of the role of Timur as the founder of their dynasty, but from this moment on, literary references and visual images of Timur became increasingly profuse.

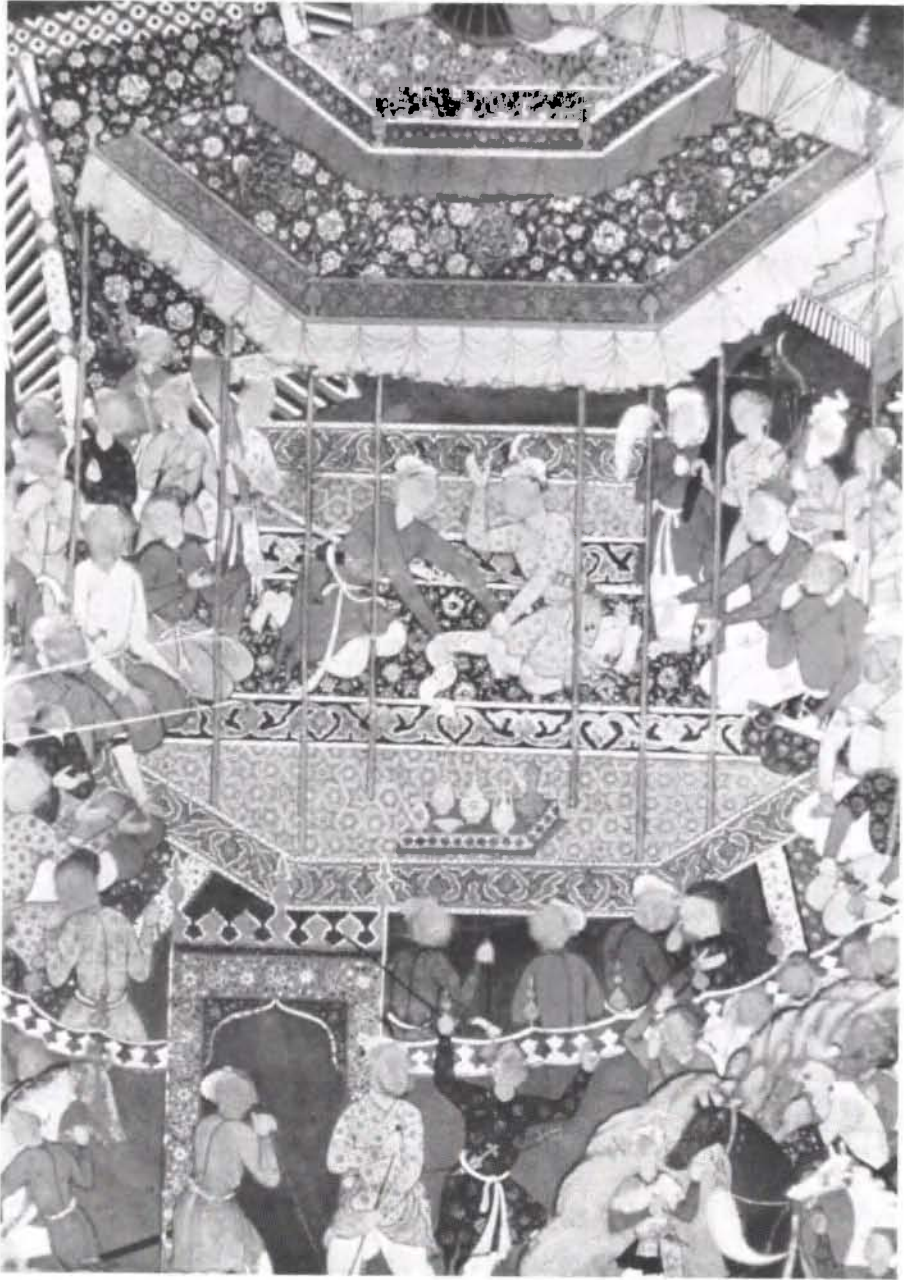
The manuscript has been surprisingly neglected. As the first known Mughal historical manuscript, it is an important precursor for all later illustrated histories. The book now contains 133 illustrations, of which the first 83 are devoted to Timur's life, and only the last 8 to Akbar (albeit some pages are missing from the end of the volume).



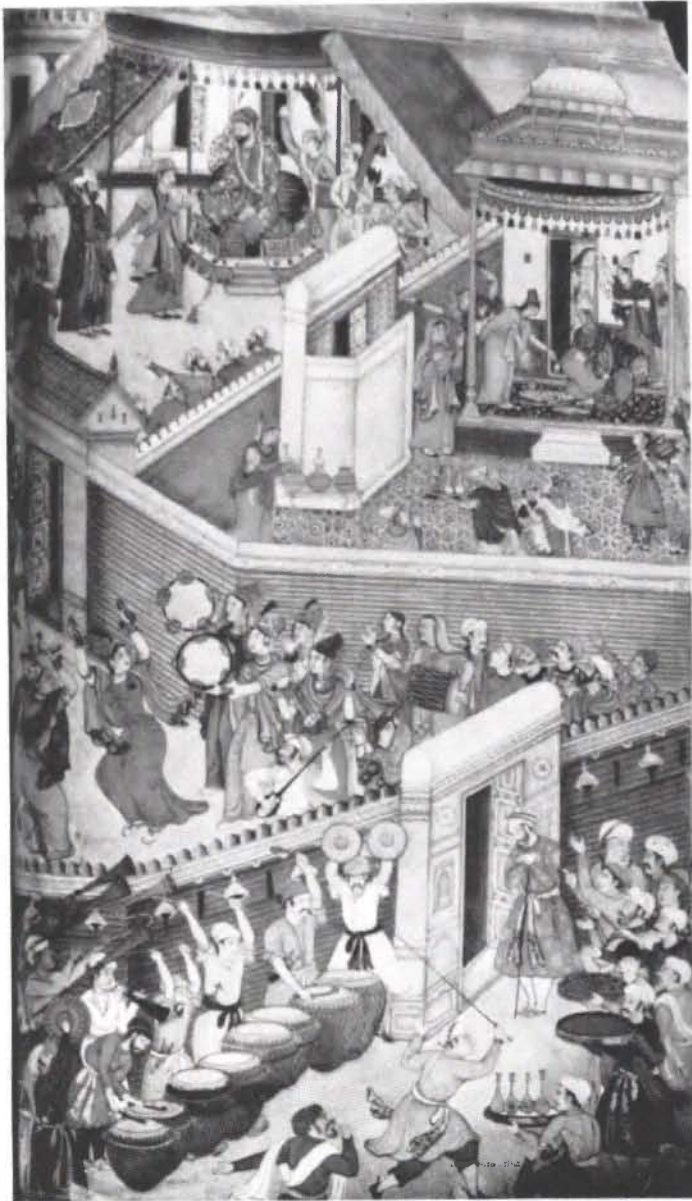
59. *European Figures*. By Manohar. From the *Muraqqa Gulshan*. Mughal, ca. 1585–1590.



60. *Timur Meets with Amir Husain*. Designed by Tulsi Kalan, painted by Ram Das. From a *Timur-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1580.



61. Audience Scene. From a *Hamza-nama* manuscript, Mughal, ca. 1562–1577.



62. *Marriage Scene*. From a *Timur-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1580.

Although the quantity and organized presentation of the historical scenes found in the *Timur-nama* is new to Mughal India, the manuscript has less than a tenth the number of paintings found in the *Hamza-nama*. The majority of the illustrations can be organized into a familiar series of subjects: battles, crossing a river, siege of a fort, a hunt, and so on. Not surprisingly, most illustrations are adaptations of established compositions. *Timur Meets with Amir Husain* (Figure 60), for example, can be compared with a superb *Hamza-nama* page (Figure 61), also depicting an audience scene.

On the other hand, there is much that is new and different. The paintings are often eagerly descriptive. One can hardly imagine a clearer or more successful depiction of the architectural relations of interior palace spaces than is found in a marriage scene showing Shah Rukh and two other princes marrying the daughters of Sultan Mahmud (Figure 62). Here the artist pulls us into the space and involves us in the celebrations. This seldom happened in the *Hamza-nama* and must—then as now—have given the illustrations an unprecedented immediacy. Nevertheless, the effect is still rough. The scene seems completely indifferent to those subtleties of surface design of which the painters of the *Hamza-nama* were still vitally aware. We will see that a major problem that Mughal painters eventually had to face was the reconciliation of such direct descriptiveness with the continued interest in decorative richness and opulence of materials and technique.

Painting during Akbar's final years at Fathpur-Sikri and Agra must center on the great *Razm-nama* manuscript commissioned in 1582 and now in Jaipur. This is a translation into Persian from Sanskrit of the monumental Hindu epic the *Mahabharata* (Book of Wars). It is at once the culmination of Akbar's earlier interest in works of fantasy and adventure (the tales have all the excitement of the *Hamza-nama*) and a product of his new interest in works of either historical importance or of textual significance to the religious communities with which he had come into contact. It is also the most important document for understanding the work of Daswanth, the Indian painter who is mentioned first after Mir Sayyid Ali and Abd as-Samad in Abu'l Fazl's list of important artists at the Mughal court. Akbar felt a particular affinity for this painter, and

Abu'l Fazl hints that this may have been highly personal. Several other connoisseurs, he states, preferred Basawan, whose name follows that of Daswanth in Abu'l Fazl's ranking.²¹ However, it is Daswanth who will bring us closest to Akbar as a personality.

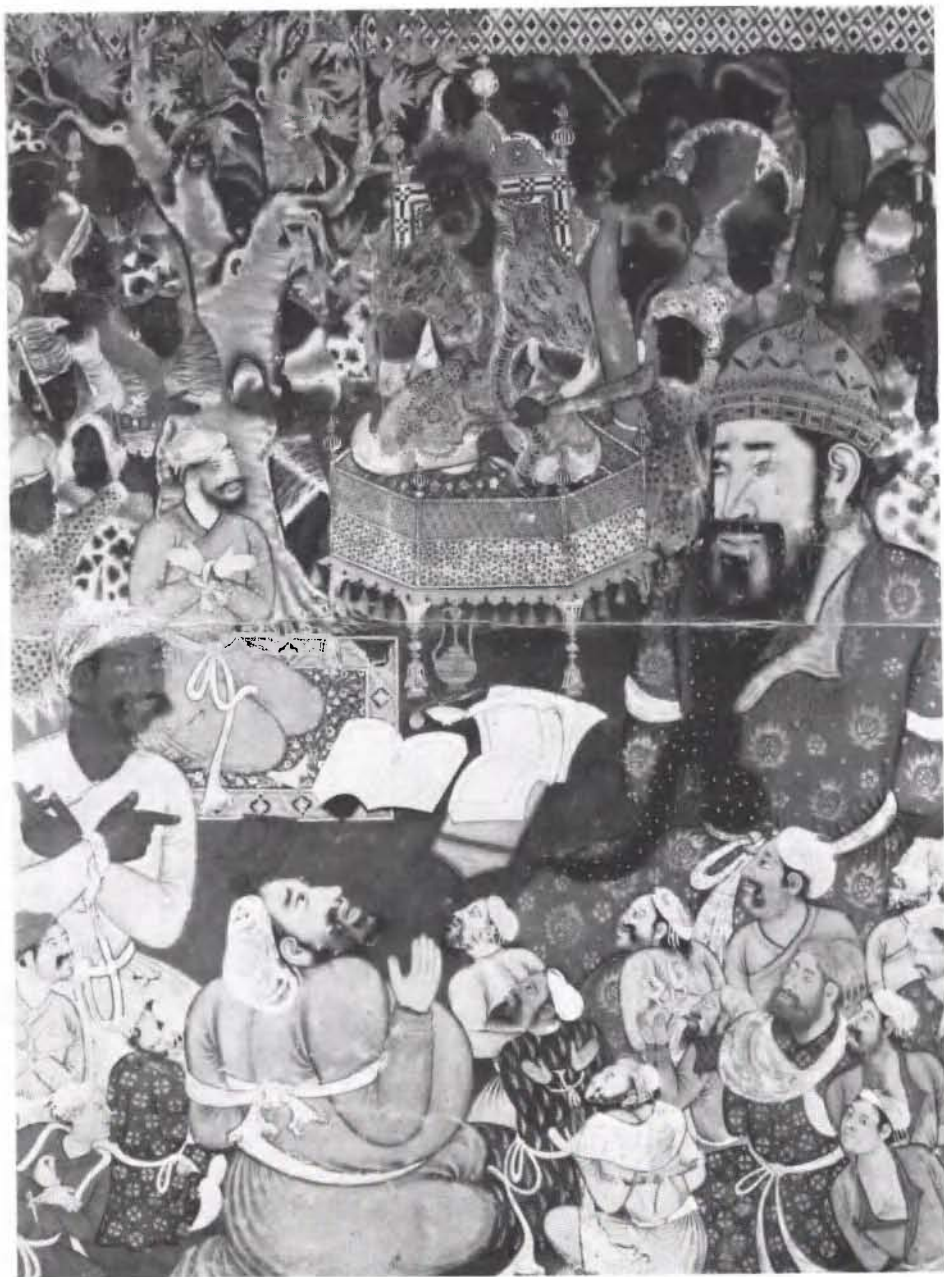
At the time of the *Razm-nama* project, it was accepted procedure for master artists to design compositions, which were then colored and actually painted by assistants. This was the procedure used for the *Timur-nama*, and several distinct artists had worked jointly on individual *Hamza-nama* illustrations. Thus no works in the *Razm-nama* can be assigned to Daswanth working alone. Nonetheless his personality is clear, for his designs frequently create a uniquely nightmarish, irrational world. This is best typified by *The Death of Drona* (Figure 63), which shows the spirit of Drona escaping from his skull and ascending to the sun.

Individual Mughal painters had subjects for which they were particularly well suited, and Daswanth was most often assigned illustrations of horrific, unearthly events or of intense religious figures. His work is certainly the key to understanding the *Hamza-nama*, where the irrational is constantly in conflict with the realistic. *The Prisoners Hamza and Zumurrad Shah Presented to the Black Prince* (Figure 64), for example, by using unexpected juxtapositions of scale and placing black faces that watch intently from the dark background, conjures up a threatening and spaceless world quite unlike that of *Hamza Hunting a Tiger* (Figure 65), which could be describing a historical incident. Early Mughal painting, works created before Akbar's departure from Fathpur-Sikri, are energized by the conflict between these two attitudes.

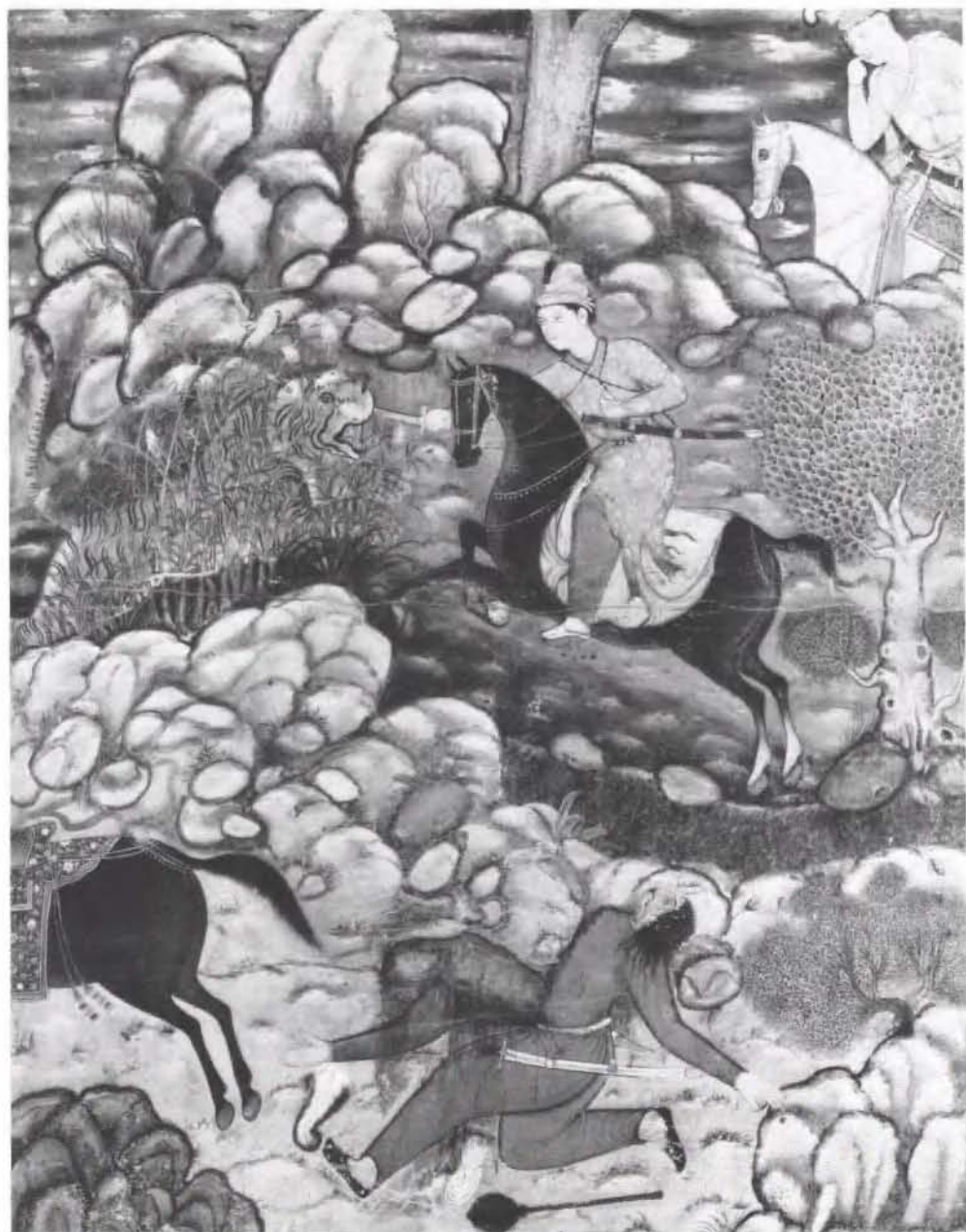
The irrational element is associated with Daswanth, who matured as an artist during the years that culminated with his patron's religious vision. By the time of the painter's last works, however, Akbar had proclaimed his new enthusiasm for the rational and historically verifiable. In the preface to a history of the first thousand years of Islam, the *Tarikh-i-Alfi*, which Akbar commissioned in A.D. 1581–82, it was stated that he had "ordered that the rational contents of different religions and faiths, should be translated in [from] the language of each, and that the rose garden of the traditional



63. *The Death of Drona*. From a *Razm-nama* manuscript. Designed by Daswanth, painted by Miskin. Mughal, ca. 1582–1586.



64. *The Prisoners Hamza and Zumurrad Shah Presented to the Black Prince.* From the *Hamza-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1562–1577.



65. *Hamza Hunting a Tiger*. From a *Hamza-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1562–1577.



66. *Two Ascetics Offered a Flower by an Ascetic.*
By Basawan. Mughal, ca. 1580.



67. *Holymen.* By Daswanth. Mughal, ca. 1575.

aspects of each religion should, as far as possible, be cleared of the thorns of bigotry."²² The emperor's altered interest, through which painting became the exploration of a more mundane world, may have had some bearing on Daswanth's suicide in 1584. From that moment Basawan, the most rational and earthly of all Mughal painters, ascended in the hierarchy to a place just below that of the elderly Iranian master Abd as-Samad.

A comparison of the differing attitudes of Daswanth and Basawan can be seen in a comparison of two drawings of holy-men. *Two Ascetics Offered a Flower by a Shepherd* (Figure 66), by

Basawan, depicts outlandish physical types, but pokes no fun. The figures could easily have been caricatured; instead Basawan sets them before us with sympathy, understanding, and even reverence (note the devoted gaze of the elderly disciple). For this artist, human contact and interaction is all important. In Daswanth's study of *Holy men* (Figure 67), on the other hand, the figures make no contact with each other; with the exception of the ascetic at the top right, who is drawn with extreme intensity, their faces are vacant and their bodies without volume. Daswanth's space is flat and no continuation of our own, whereas Basawan, with minimal means, suggests that his subjects are part of our world.

The shift occurred just as the emperor left Fathpur-Sikri. Because of the new emphasis we will finally be able to find abundant imagery of Akbar himself.

III

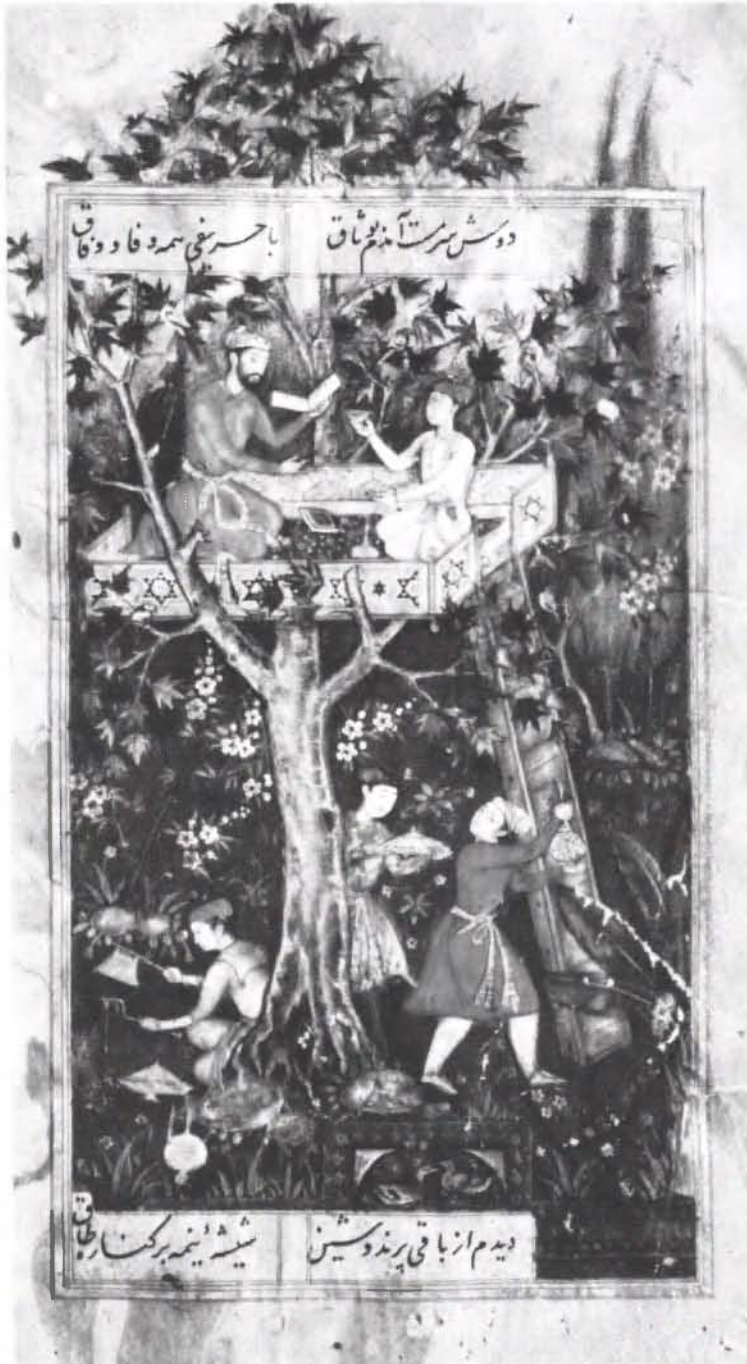
Akbar and the Past

TRADITION AND INNOVATION
AT LAHORE

IN HIS account of the middle months of 1585, Abu'l Fazl wrote of Akbar's departure from Fathpur-Sikri, his new capital: "Everyone who cannot withdraw his regard from superficialities is astonished to behold the sovereign abandoning those lordly dwellings and traversing fields and deserts. At this time when Fathpur—that glorious diadem of God—was the envy of the age, able and observant men perceived that in spite of H.M.'s great affection for that place, the thought of hunting in the Punjab had flashed upon his clear soul. From time to time the thought developed more and more. Men were surprised because they did not see the cause of this, and the far-seeing and experienced were watching for the reason."¹

Once he had arrived in the north, Akbar was soon involved in subduing a rebellion in the territories around Kabul. With that situation resolved, Abu'l Fazl reports: "The idea of most people was that the world's Khedive would not turn his rein until he arrived at Fathpur. But the sovereign of an awakened heart did not yield to such a wish, and the pleasant places of that city did not engage his heart."² Instead he established his capitol at Lahore.

The traditional but often challenged reason why Fathpur-Sikri was abandoned is that an adequate water supply was never available. Yet there is no historical corroboration of this possibility, and Abu'l Fazl's account of the puzzlement caused by the move suggests that one aspect of the reason was much less mundane and far more personal. If we examine the changes in Akbar's interests and taste in the 1580s, it seems equally plausible that the city's architectural experimentalism and intimacy no longer fulfilled the more obviously imperial and



68. *Anwari and a Companion in a Tree-House*. Attributed to Basawan. From a *Diwan* of Anwari manuscript. Mughal, dated 1588.

epicurean taste that the ruler's new projects had begun to reveal. In painting he now commissioned further large, physically impressive dynastic histories on the model established by the *Timur-nama*, and classic literary texts illustrated with the most refined, elegant brushwork. These terms are chosen with care. Refinement suggests the slow perfection of accepted standards. Until the end of the century Akbari painting breaks little new ground, although it does continually polish and intensify the innovative style that Mughal artists had so quickly and energetically achieved.

The new taste is best seen in the tiny, very familiar *Diwan* of Anwari manuscript.³ The volume is dated 1588, and the smallest of its fifteen illustrations is only slightly larger than a postage stamp. It is the first manuscript in which perfection of materials and workmanship takes precedence over sheer visual excitement or an impact resulting from the size and quantity of illustrations. It was produced by the greatest Mughal artists and is the first Mughal book that can rightfully be termed "exquisite." In *Anwari and a Companion in a Tree-House* (Figure 68) there is no strong effect created by color, composition, or gesture, as in the *Hamza-nama* or *Timur-nama*, and no energizing roughness of execution. The *Diwan* illustrations are subtle, quiet works, demanding time and, more important, patience to reveal their qualities. There is no evidence of the irrational or visionary, such as is found in the *Hamza-nama*. Although the text is mystical poetry, scenes are presented as if they were everyday events at Akbar's court. Figures are unequivocally defined and modeled to give them physical veracity; and, especially in the superb small paintings of birds which decorate the text panels, there is evident delight in the natural world.

Unlike the *Timur-nama*, the *Diwan* of Anwari illustrations were executed by single artists working alone, giving more stylistic and qualitative unity to each scene than was possible with the almost assembly-line methods used in the larger manuscripts. This is the procedure that became standard during the Lahore period. *Anwari and a Companion in a Tree-House*, attributed to Basawan, continues that artist's interest in defining figures within a three-dimensional space; note, in particular, the man at the foot of the ladder looking over his shoulder, or the cook, at the left, roasting meat over a fire. The

use of light and shade to suggest bulk and physical weight—seen especially clearly in the kneeling cook—is among the major characteristics that eventually separate mature Mughal works from those of Iran or pre-Mughal India, and it is seen here in developed form. The technique obviously was learned in part from European works available in India; compare Manohar's adaptation of the *Royal Polyglot Bible* frontispiece (Figures 58 and 59). Its adoption, however, was not caused merely by infatuation with exotica. The use of European techniques of modeling reflects the reawakening of a particularly Indian sensibility for volumetric form. *The Merchant's Daughter Meets the Gardener* (Figure 5), from the *Tuti-nama*, was discussed as an example of a pre-Mughal, Indian style incorporated into the Mughal aesthetic under Akbar. Even there, in a painting not only devoid of European techniques but also in some ways justifiably termed flat and spaceless, the women are unquestionably full-bodied. Indian art, no matter what its means, is always concerned with evocations of volume.

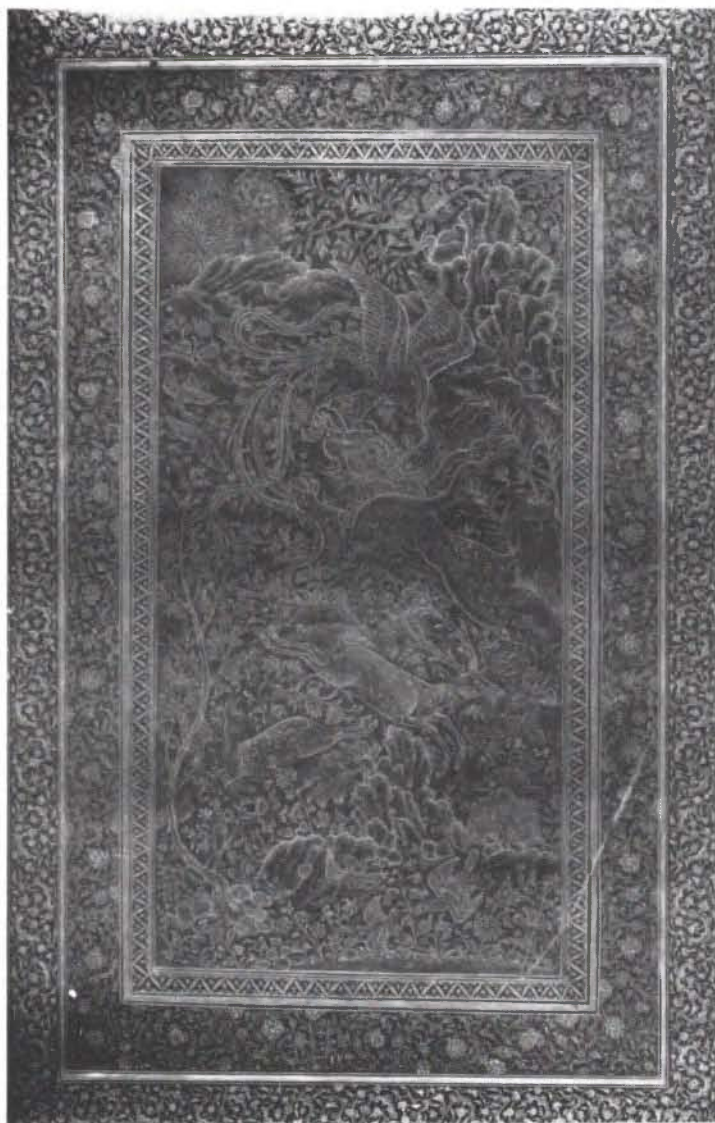
Another aspect of European art of interest to the Mughals was its Christian identity. Knowledge of Christianity was entrenched in Mughal myth and symbolism long before the arrival of European works of art. When Abu'l Fazl traced the established genealogy of Akbar, he began with the impregnation of the Mongol queen Alanquwa by a divine shaft of light. "The cupola of chastity [he wrote] became pregnant by that light in the same way as did her Majesty Miryam [Mary, mother of Jesus]." ⁴ Familiarity with European images, as well as the imagery of Timurid Iran, had importance as statements of dynastic lineage.

Abu'l Fazl, who fully realized the impact of European example on Mughal style, wrote: "Such excellent artists have assembled here that a fine match has been created to the world renowned unique art of Bihzad [the greatest Timurid artist in Iran] and the magic making of the Europeans. Delicacy of work, clarity of line and boldness of execution, as well as other fine qualities have reached perfection, and inanimate objects appear to have come alive. More than one hundred persons have reached the status of a master and gained fame; and they are numerous who are near to reaching that state or are half-way there." ⁵

By the 1590s, when the passage was written, Iran and Europe were held up as standards against which the artistic qualities of Mughal paintings were to be judged. There is no mention of Hindu works, although Akbar had Hindu, as well as Muslim, painters in his employ. If pre-Mughal Indian stylistic traits, such as those seen in the *Tuti-nama*, were no longer as visible as they had been earlier in the Akbar period, it is not because they had been rejected. Rather, the work of Hindu painters was fully integrated into the Mughal style.

Illustrations datable to the last decade of the sixteenth century perfectly embody the taste of the mature Akbar, for whom the directness, roughness, simplicity, and immediate excitement which he had earlier demanded were no longer appealing. Mughal books had become luxurious, sumptuous objects, set with gilded and lacquered covers, decorated with illuminated frontispieces and chapter headings, and often with elaborate marginal decorations after Safavid Iranian prototypes. Because of the empire's wealth and power, the finest pigments, papers, and brushes could be imported, sometimes from great distances: lapis lazuli from Afghanistan, for example, and indian red from Kashgar. This allowed a stylistic choice, control, and refinement that would not have been possible earlier, even if Akbar had wished.

The style of these years is associated with Lahore, but only because Akbar was in residence there. And in addition to the *Diwan* of Anwari, many other anthologies of poetry dated in the mid-1590s are known. They show how focused and confident Akbar's taste (and the Mughal style) had become. A *Khamsa* of Nizami, dated 1595, has extraordinarily opulent covers and illuminations (Figure 69). *One Physician Killing Another* (Figure 70), from the same manuscript, is painted by Miskin, who is prominent on Abu'l Fazl's list of major artists. The work is animated by areas of brilliant pattern, such as the tile work, rugs, or central doorway, as well as by tours de force of technical expertise, such as the red curtains, which proclaim Miskin's ability to control effects of light and shadow. So vividly do these details assert themselves, however, that they detract from the drama of the narrative. The figures of the seated men seem almost incidental, no more worthy of our attention than the textile patterns or the European-influenced



69. Cover to a *Khamsa* of Nizami. Lacquer on boards. Mughal, dated 1595.



70. *One Physician Killing Another*. By Miskin. From a *Khamsa* of Nizami. Mughal, dated 1595.



71. *Majnun at the Tomb of Laila*. By Manohar. From a *Khamisa* of Nizami. Mughal, dated 1595.



72. *Salim Brings Majnun's Mother to Visit Him*. By Sanwlah. From a *Khamisa* of Nizami. Mughal, dated 1595.

paintings on the back wall. In many ways the level of physical refinement, the reassertion of technical precision, and the concern for vivid pattern in these later manuscript illustrations revive elements of the Iranian aesthetic from which Mughal painting originally separated itself.

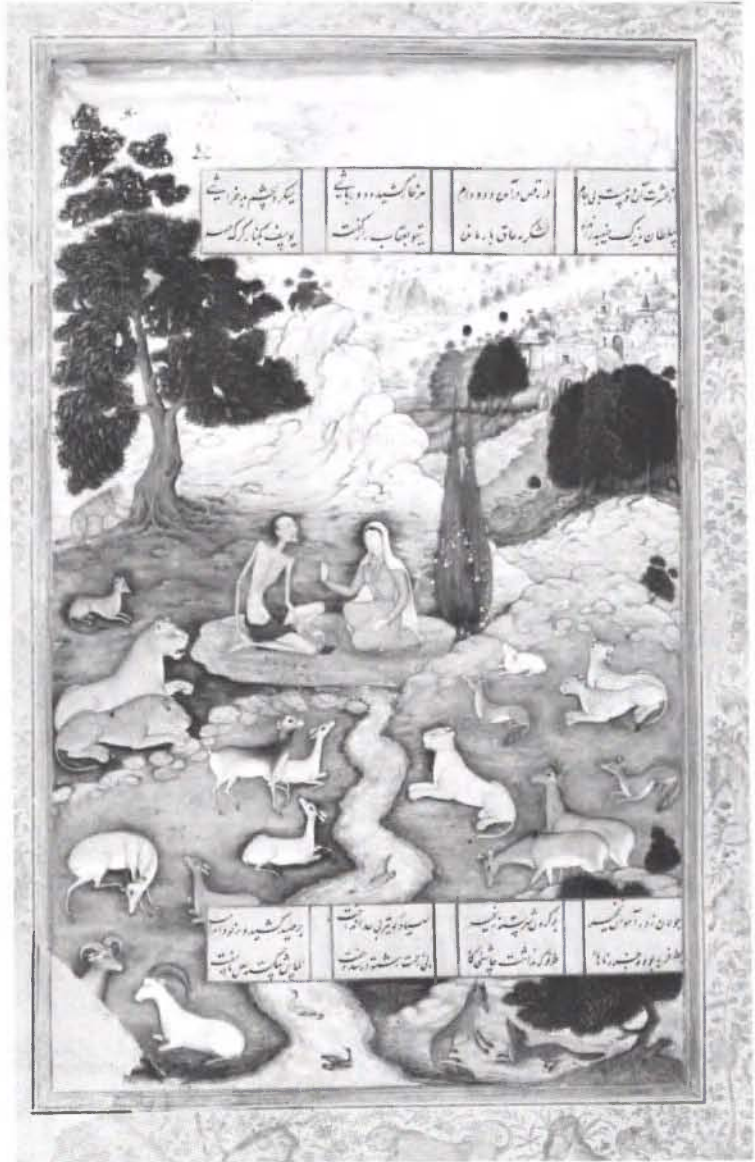
Within such individual manuscripts as the 1595 *Khamisa* of Nizami there is remarkable consistency of style among the illustrations. This can be seen by comparing scenes from the story of Laila and Majnun, a romantic fable of two lovers whose parents refuse them permission to meet. Majnun, the hero, retires to the wilderness, while Laila is forced to marry. Eventually she dies, to be lamented by her beloved, whom people look upon as a madman. Nizami's words describe the scene

illustrated in Figure 71: "even the wilderness no longer afforded a refuge to this homeless heart. Again and again his longing drove Majnun back to the grave of his beloved; like a mountain stream he rushed down into the valley, covering with thousands of kisses the earth where his buried love awaited him. While he was lying there, weeping and telling his grief, the animals kept watch over him, so that he should not be disturbed. Thus it happened that people began to avoid Layla's grave. Not surprisingly, for who was to know whether the madman would suddenly appear? Who wanted to be struck down by a lion's paw, to be torn by a wolf's fangs?"⁶

In the illustration of that episode, as well as in a scene where Majnun is visited by his mother (Figure 72), somber tonalities are emphasized by dark trees silhouetted against deep space. The painters of the two scenes, Manohar and Sanwlah, have quite different sensibilities, however. Manohar's depiction of Majnun lamenting (Figure 71) surrounds the emaciated hero with mundane activities, whereas Majnun's reunion with his mother is set within a turbulent, animated landscape that heightens the intense emotionalism of Nizami's text. "She now washed in a flood of tears the poor face, so wasted, yet so familiar; now she tamed the wilderness of his hair with a comb taken from the folds of her dress. How neglected he was from head to foot. Moaning softly and caressing him, she tended the wounds caused by thorns and stones. When Majnun began at last to resemble the boy Qays, and when both had tasted the first pleasure and the first grief of their reunion, only then did the mother recover her speech."⁷

Perhaps because both works have similar attitudes to composition, color, space, and technique, the differences in the artistic personalities of the artists are easier to identify and more rewarding to examine. We see this in a third scene illustrating the story, where the same artistic tools are used, with yet a further result. Nar Singh, who painted *Layla Visiting Majnun in the Wilderness* (Figure 73), has created a magical, unworldly landscape, which seems to isolate the lovers and intensify their union. Nonetheless, here too the landscape recedes into deep space, and tones of brown predominate.

Despite its general stylistic similarity to the British Library Nizami illustrations, *Layla Visiting Majnun in the Wilderness*



73. *Laila Visiting Majnun in the Wilderness*. By Nar Singh. From a *Khamsa* of Amir Khusrau Dihlavi. Mughal, dated 1597–1598.

comes from a different manuscript, a *Khamsa* of the poet Amir Khusrau Dihlavi, dated 1597–98. While each of the various Akbari manuscripts made about 1570 is highly distinctive in character—the *Hamza-nama* (see Figures 40 and 41) is very different from the *Anwar-i-Suhaili* (Figures 47 and 48), and

neither could be mistaken for the *Deval Devi Khidr Khan* (Figure 46)—the Lahore manuscripts are almost interchangeable. Subdued in color, emotionally intense, and spatially vast, these paintings as a group are a striking contrast to the *Hamza-nama*, finished less than two decades earlier. The evolution of the Mughal style was swift, and under increasingly centralized control. A major factor in this stylistic development was the maturing of Akbar's own taste, and the greater visual experience he now brought to the works he examined, but other factors came into play.

In the Lahore period works by Abd as-Samad are once again in abundant evidence. *Khusrau Hunting* (Figure 74) is from the British Library *Khamsa* of Nizami and thus datable to 1595. The quiet colors and meticulous, miniaturistic technique ally it to the paintings we have been examining; the lack of spatial depth and a rich use of gold for the sky, as well as the nonindividualized figures and the organization of space into separate cells that are practically self-contained compartments, are among its very conservative traits. Even at the end of his exceptionally long life Abd as-Samad, who had first met Humayun half a century earlier, had not strayed far from the training he had received in Iran. This work, for example, recalls *A Prince Hunting with Falcons* (Figure 39), which can be dated almost four decades earlier. Both arrange landscape forms to frame segments of the action and compose the scene flat on the surface. In each, a tan and gold landscape serves as a superb setting heightening the brilliant colors associated with the hunters. Abd as-Samad remains indifferent to the European devices of modeling and spatial depth that were by now fully absorbed into the vocabulary of Mughal painting; with the exception of *Khusrau Hunting*, they have been visible throughout the Lahore volumes.

This is true too if we examine a more typical type of composition. *Jamshid Writing on a Rock* (Figure 44), a scene in which a great Iranian king meditates on the brevity of life, is inscribed to Abd as-Samad and dated 1588. Here dense and highly active mountain forms are stabilized by the strong shape of a tree, a detail that appears throughout the painter's works and in those of his sons and pupils.⁸ Despite his involvement with the innovations of painting under Akbar, however,



74. *Khusrau Hunting*. By Abd as-Samad. From a *Khamsa* of Nizami. Mughal, dated 1595.

Abd as-Samad was never able to give to his figures the individualized physiognomy and psychological understanding that other artists accomplished.

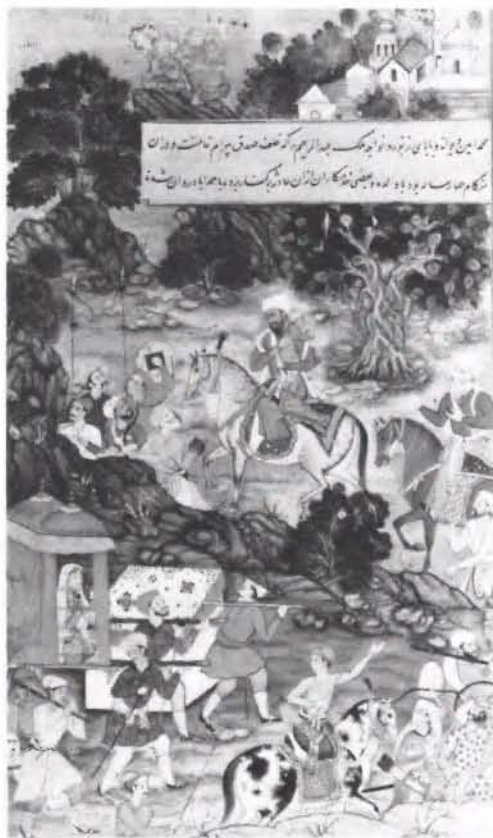
FROM the end of Humayun's reign, the style of Abd as-Samad became an important touchstone for judging the innovations and accomplishments of Mughal painting. As the productions of the imperial workshops became more tightly controlled and coordinated, his directing influence was increasingly felt. That he should have considerable power in the imperial studios is no surprise. He was the most prestigious artist at Akbar's court, and he had been closely associated with both the Emperor Humayun and with Shah Tahmasp, in whose employment his career had begun. Jahangir wrote: "Abdu-s-Samad, who in the art of painting had no equal in the age, had obtained from the late king Humayun the title of *Shirin-qalam* (Sweet pen), and in his council had attained a great dignity and was on intimate terms with him (the king)."⁹ He had taught painting to both Akbar and Daswanth. At the completion of the *Hamza-nama* project, he was given major administrative responsibilities, including the directorship of the mint at Fathpur-Sikri. His son, Muhammad Sharif, had grown up with the young Prince Salim (Jahangir), who wrote: "his connection with me is such that I look upon him as a brother, a son, a friend, and a companion . . . I had perfect confidence in his friendship, intelligence, learning, and acquaintance with affairs."¹⁰ From Jahangir, this is high praise indeed. I know of no other artist family held in such esteem or given such power.

In the Lahore manuscripts Mughal painters finally achieved the standards of technical excellence, emotional restraint, and visual opulence that had been part of Abd as-Samad's style from the beginning; we first saw it in *Prince Akbar Presents a Painting to Humayun in a Tree-House* (Figure 1). The Lahore manuscripts of the 1590s are the culmination of the directions that he established. And the death of that extraordinary and domineering figure seems to have allowed Mughal painting to move in a new direction at the end of Akbar's reign.

To define the change of style that occurred about 1598, when Akbar left Lahore to return to Agra, we must consider

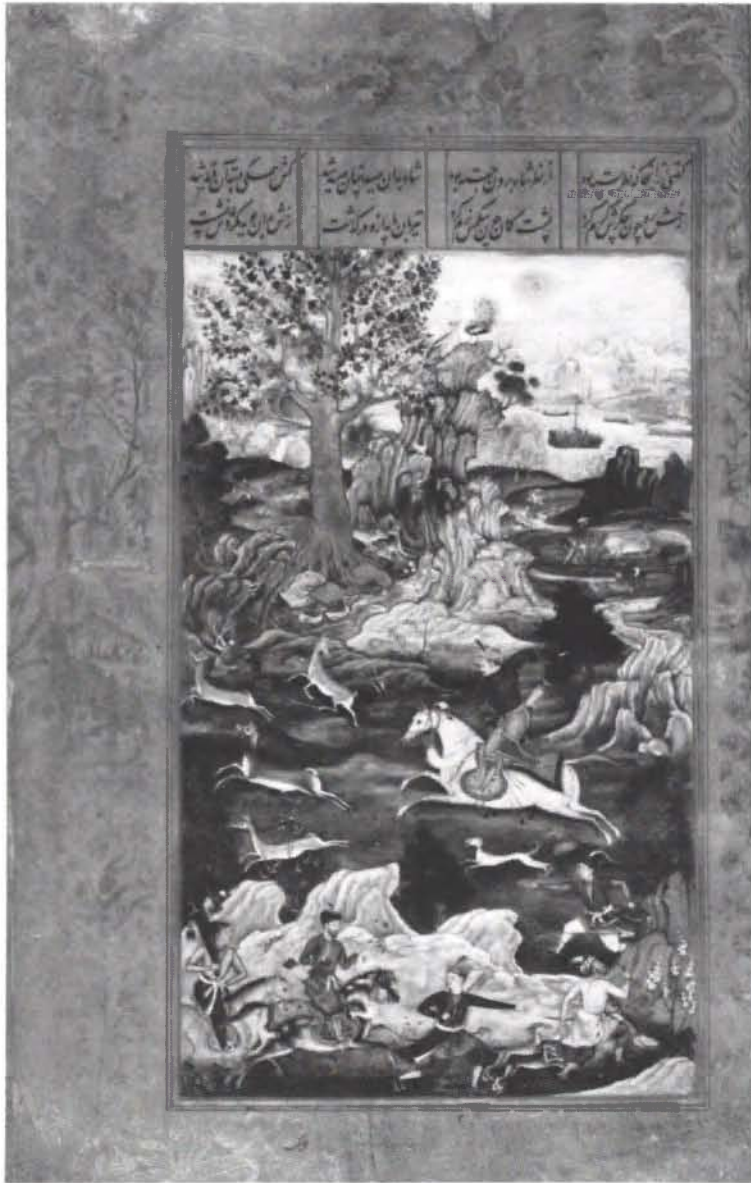


75. *Amir Sultan Husain Receives His Son Badi-uz-Zaman.* By Mukund. From a *Timur-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1580.



76. *Muhammad Amin Diwana Escorts the Widow of Bairam Khan.* By Mukund. From an *Akbar-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1590 or earlier.

the earliest known illustrations to the *Akbar-nama*. The majority are from a volume in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and the manuscript presents one of the great problems of Mughal art. The text of the *Akbar-nama* was commissioned by the emperor in 1590–91, when he asked Abu'l Fazl to write an official account of his reign. Even earlier, in 1574, Akbar had established a Record Office, where fourteen clerks kept note of the emperor's life. As Abu'l Fazl later described it, "Their duty is to write down the orders and doings of His Majesty and whatever the heads of the departments report; what His Majesty eats and drinks; when he sleeps and when he rises; the etiquette in the state hall," and so on.¹¹ This infor-



77. *Faridun Hunting*. By Mukund. From a *Khamsa* of Nizami manuscript. Mughal, dated 1595.

mation, lost to us today, was supplemented in the Record Office by memoirs of the reigns of Babur and Humayun written especially at Akbar's request by older members of the imperial family or by family servants. Abu'l Fazl was given access to the entire archive.

The first volume of the *Akbar-nama* was finished and presented to the emperor in 1596. It covered the years up to 1572 and included an extensive description of the foundation and loss of empire under Babur and Humayun. Two years later a second volume was completed, bringing the account up to date. The project had taken seven years, according to information from Abu'l Fazl's own narrative, which concludes: "Many a dark night passed into morning and many a long day grew to eve, ere this mine of the diadem of eternal happiness, this pearl of the throne of everlasting sovereignty could be publicly displayed."¹²

Illustrations in the Victoria and Albert Museum manuscript include incidents dated between 1560 to 1578. The illustrations in that copy of the volume, therefore, should not date earlier than about the mid-1590s, and even that assumes that they were made as the text was being written. The artistic style throughout, however, has little to do with the Lahore manuscripts being produced during the same period.

If we examine two works by a single painter, Mukund, one of the artists mentioned near the beginning of Abu'l Fazl's list of major painters at Akbar's court, it is difficult to accept that *Muhammad Amin Diwana Escorts the Widow of Bairam Khan* (Figure 76), from the *Akbar-nama*, is contemporary with *Fari-dun Hunting* (Figure 77) from the Nizami manuscript of 1595. Mukund's *Akbar-nama* page is far more closely related to *Amir Sultan Husain Receives His Son Badi-uz-zaman* (Figure 75), from the *Timur-nama*—the first known Akbari illustrated historical manuscript. This specific page may even have served as the basic compositional type adapted by Mukund for his *Akbar-nama* page. The choice would have been appropriate, for each episode concerns a caravan journey, during which an older man greets a youth (or child) in full view of harem ladies in their palanquins. In each, the placement of the hills and the movement of the caravan through the landscape is almost identical.

Another factor that should be considered when assigning a date to Mukund's *Akbar-nama* page (Figure 76)—and to the manuscript as a whole—is the relation of the style of the folio to that of Abd as-Samad. The grouping of figures into space cells separated by dark landscape, the gold sky, and the flatness are all close to details of *Jamshid Writing on a Rock* (Figure

44), datable to 1588. Mukund began as a protégé of Abd as-Samad but, judging by the evidence of the Nizami page, by 1595 his style had become distinctive and independent.

Many other pages from the *Timur-nama* seem to have been adapted by painters of the *Akbar-nama*. *Akbar Hunting near Palam* (Figure 79), for example, is derived from an earlier hunting scene centered on Timur (Figure 78), certainly a consciously made association. This is not to suggest that exact copies were intended by painters, merely that the compositional vocabulary used in the *Akbar-nama* was already established.

This is especially true of those episodes from Akbar's life that were included in both manuscripts. For example, *The Siege of Chitor* (Figure 80) in the *Timur-nama* seems to have been the inspiration for *The Siege of Rinthambhor* (Figure 81) in the *Akbar-nama*. They were painted by different artists, however, which is the case throughout these comparisons.

A second *Akbar-nama* manuscript, divided between the British Library and the Chester Beatty Library, with many additional pages dispersed into both public and private collections, reportedly bears the inscribed date of 1604 on one of its folios.¹³ Its style develops directly out of the Lahore poetical manuscripts, and the work is as unified and carefully organized as the earlier *Akbar-nama* is chaotic. It is a far more epicurean work than the Victoria and Albert Museum volume, and the pages are of a more consistent, high quality. On the other hand, it exemplifies an achieved style being celebrated and lacks the vitality and experimentalism of the earlier work.

A comparison of illustrations of the same episode from each of these manuscripts is useful, though in general only slight repetition of exact incidents is depicted. The later volume has a smaller number of illustrations, and there seems to have been no restriction in the choice of subject matter.

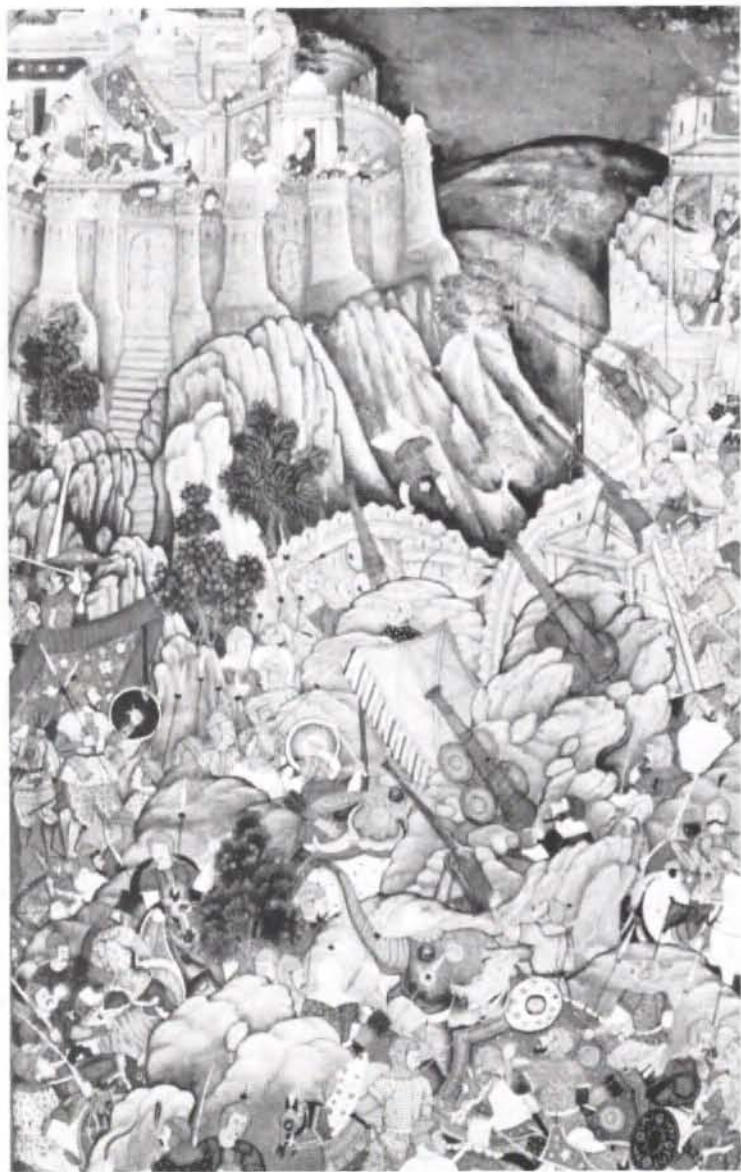
Three days after his accession, Akbar commanded the presence at court of Abu'l-Ma'ali, a favorite courtier of Humayun. However, wrote Abu'l Fazl, "the cap-peak of his understanding had been set awry by the wind of arrogance." Moreover, his brain "had been ruined by the worship of his own beauty and the intoxication produced by the world," and he demanded to be treated by Akbar as he had been by the em-



78. *Timur Hunting*. From a *Timur-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1580.



79. *Akbar Hunting near Palam*. Designed by Mukund, painted by Manohar. From an *Akbar-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1590 or earlier.



80. *The Siege of Chitor*. By Paras. From a *Timur-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1580.



81. *The Siege of Rintbambhor*. By Khem Karan. From an *Akbar-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1590 or earlier.



82. *The Arrest of Shah Abu'l-Ma'ali*. Designed by Basawan, painted by Shankar. From an *Akbar-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1590 or earlier.



83. *The Arrest of Shah Abu'l-Ma'ali*. By La'l. From an *Akbar-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1604.

peror's father. When he appeared, still rebellious, he was arrested. In Abu'l Fazl's words, "This was the first head of game that fell into fortune's net."¹⁴

As the first opportunity for Akbar to assert his authority, this was an important event; it is illustrated in each of the two *Akbar-nama* manuscripts. In addition, both Abd as-Samad and Dust Muhammad (Figure 11) painted portraits of the youth.¹⁵ In the earlier of the manuscript pages (Figure 82), separated from the Victoria and Albert Museum volume, the concentration is on clear presentation of narrative action; gestures are clearly stated, and color enhances the excitement of the arrest. The later depiction (Figure 83), in contrast, is a lightly colored drawing, which forces us to examine details with greater attention and to become involved with the interactions between people. The artist, La'l, whose career had begun early in Akbar's reign, could not make a full transition to the new element of imperial taste represented here. This is better accomplished in the work of younger painters, men less inhibited by tradition.

A hunting scene (Figure 85), also from the later *Akbar-nama*, is by Manohar, the son of Akbar's great painter Basawan. It illustrates an event that occurred in the spring of 1567. "At this time, when the territory of Lahore became by the advent of the sublime cortege a rosegarden of fortune, and H.M. the Shahinshah was engaged in captivating hearts, the bounty of spring encircled the land, and balmy breezes began to blow. The gardens afforded a wondrous spectacle to beholders, and the tulips and other flowers cast nooses of enchantment over the onlookers." Akbar commanded that a grand hunt be prepared, for which 50,000 beaters were employed. They formed a vast circle, and spent a month driving the game toward the center. Abu'l Fazl then reports that the emperor "placed the foot of dominion in the stirrup of auspiciousness and made his tiger-like steed career in the pursuit of the prancing deer. He used the arrow, the sword, the lance and the musket. At the beginning, the hunting ground was ten miles in circumference. But day by day the *qamargha* was pushed on, and its area lessened. Within the space his swift steed sometimes swept afar the game from the ground, and sometimes he caught the lightning-footed deer by the lasso."¹⁶

The episode is illustrated also in the Victoria and Albert Museum volume (Figure 84). In each of the two depictions the emperor is within a ring fenced in by branches and surrounding the tents of the harem, but the later work lacks the quantity and variety of animals and people. The artist of the earlier page felt it necessary to describe the harem enclosure in detail, even showing the women; the later illustration simply includes tents and lets our imagination fill in the details. The result is that the action in the second work is less frenzied, the space deeper and less confused.

A secondary subject, however, is more informative. Each scene includes a reference to the punishment of Hamid Bhakkari, a courtier whose attack on one of Akbar's nobles brought down the royal wrath and a command that he be decapitated. Abu'l Fazl writes: "Qulij Khan twice struck him with that segment of a diamond [Akbar's special sword], but did not injure a hair of his head. On this account the mystery of destiny was accepted and his life spared, but as a warning his head was shaved and he was mounted on an ass and taken around the hunting ground."¹⁷ In the earlier hunting scene (Figure 84) Hamid Bhakkari is placed at the top right, and though we are aware of the act of his punishment, it is incidental to the overall scene. In the later interpretation (Figure 85) he is at the bottom of the illustration and much more central to our experience of the work. He has also become highly individualized, a character we view with sympathy—as do the men around him. Unlike the earlier version, the artist here is concerned with real rapport and human interactions. We react to the emotions, not just the situation. The colors of the later work are softer, and the figures more modeled and three-dimensional. Interests have shifted from action and gesture to personality and thought. Even the portrait of Akbar is perceptibly more accurate. This is a basic shift that occurs in Mughal painting of the late Akbar period.

A third comparison concerns two illustrations of the defeat of the rebellious Ibrahim Husain Mirza, for Akbar "knew that the chastisement of the presumptuous and rebellious was at the head of the deeds of sovereignty." In this incident, which happened during the emperor's conquest of Gujarat in 1572, Akbar himself pursued his enemy, although "as the ground



84. *Akbar Hunting*. Designed by Miskin, painted by Sarwan. From an *Akbar-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1590 or earlier.



85. *Akbar Hunting*. By Manohar. From an *Akbar-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1604.



86. *The Battle of Akbar and Ibrahim Husain Mirza*. By Banwari Khurd. From a *Timur-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1580.



87. *The Battle of Akbar and Ibrahim Husain Mirza*. Designed by Lal, painted by Babu Naqqash. From an *Akbar-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1590 or earlier.

was rough and there were thorn bushes two horsemen could not advance abreast."¹⁸

The *Battle of Akbar and Ibrahim Husain Mirza* appears in both manuscripts, although the pictorial presentations are quite different. Whereas in the earlier page (Figure 87) the army seems entangled in the cactus, the later scene (Figure 88) shows the thorn bushes simply as a hedge over which the horsemen jump. A third depiction (Figure 86), the earliest, is included in the *Timur-nama*, and Banwari Khurd's illustration in that book was certainly the model for La'l's clarified design (Figure 87) in the Victoria and Albert Museum *Akbar-nama*. Moreover, they do not seem far apart in date.

To return to the problematic aspects of the Victoria and Albert Museum *Akbar-nama*, it appears from visual evidence that the work is an immediate continuation of the *Timur-nama* project, so similar are the compositions and style of the volumes. The later *Akbar-nama*, on the other hand, must have been made at a quite different moment in the history of the imperial workshops.¹⁹ The problem is that few of the Victoria and Albert Museum *Akbar-nama* paintings would be dated in the mid- or later 1590s on the basis of style, for they do not resemble accepted works of that period. On the other hand, this is the date of the text they illustrate. There were biographies of Akbar preceding the monumental, official project commissioned from Abu'l Fazl, and we must seek to determine whether the Victoria and Albert Museum manuscript simply reused paintings originally intended to illustrate an earlier text. Such movement of illustrations among manuscripts was commonplace, although it has rarely been acknowledged.

The move toward increasingly precise descriptiveness coupled with quieter action and a concentration on human interaction culminates, at least for the Akbar period, in a manuscript of the *Kulliyat* of Sa'di, datable to about 1603. Certain pages from the work would have been stylistically appropriate in the second *Akbar-nama*, while others are even more innovative. *Dara and the Herdsman* (Figure 89) falls into the first category, while *Sa'di and His Patron* (Figure 90) is by a younger artist, who can develop the tendencies I have outlined into truly new results. He has further simplified the picture surface;



88. *The Battle of Akbar and Ibrahim Husain Mirza*. By Sur Das. From an *Akbar-nama* manuscript. Mughal, ca. 1604.



89. *Dara and the Herdsman*. By La'l. From a *Kulliyat* of Sa'di. Mughal, ca. 1604.

its few forms are placed with immense care; nothing seems haphazard. The relationships between the men are intense, and the small mosque is a very accurate evocation of an architectural space. Details are drawn with absolute control, and the colors and the patterns they define are rich and intricate.

If *Dara and the Herdsman* recalls the visual turbulence, profuse details, and rich rhythms of the style that developed under the direction of Abd as-Samad, *Sa'di and His Patron* does not. Lacking the flamboyance and visual density of earlier manuscript illustrations, it is restrained and epicurean. It represents the Mughal equivalent of the Timurid style long held as an ideal at the imperial court. This is not a Timurid painting; Mughal artists preferred fuller volumes, deeper space, and greater psychological depth than did Iranian painters. In its restraint, technical control, and physical beauty, however—terms I would use together for few Akbari paintings before this date—*Sa'di and His Patron* can be compared to such Bokharan continuations of Timurid illustrations as *The Wedding of Mibr and Nahid* (Figure 91), from a *Mibr u Mushtari* manuscript dated 1523, or a *Shah-nama* of circa 1440 present in India from the reign of Babur.²⁰ Despite the strong presence of the Safavid-trained Abd as-Samad at court, it was Timurid painting—the tradition of which Bihzad was the greatest exponent—that Akbar most coveted for his collections. Persian books in his library included major imperial Timurid manuscripts as well as abundant examples of the later Timurid styles practiced at Bokhara.²¹ Furthermore, the two major Iranian masters whom Humayun brought to India were among the most conservative (that is, the most Timurid) of painters. The pure Timurid ideal could truly come to transform the Mughal style only at the end of Akbar's reign, after Abd as-Samad's disappearance. As Akbar would have wished, these works make the strongest possible statement of the emperor's direct link to Timur and the Mughals' dynastic homeland.

The question of young Prince Salim's role in the changes in late Akbari painting is important, especially because the styles practiced during his rule as the Emperor Jahangir are so direct a continuation of these achievements. During much of this time, however, he was in rebellion against his father and living at Allahabad to the east, where he set up an independent



90. *Sa'di and His Patron*. From a *Kulliyat* of Sa'di. Mughal, ca. 1604.



91. *The Wedding of Mihr and Nabid*. From a *Mihr u Mushtari* manuscript. Iran, Bukhara, dated 1523.

court. There, between 1599 and 1604, he employed several painters, and a substantial number of manuscripts can be attributed to these Allahabad years. Several are inscribed and dated, allowing us to be especially confident that Salim was their patron.²²

The *Jog Vashisht* in the Chester Beatty Library is one example. Many of its illustrations are by painters who were unquestionably in Salim's employ in 1602, the year the volume was completed.²³ However, although *King Lavana Visits the Village of Outcastes* (Figure 92) shares the quieter colors and simpler composition of contemporary imperial painting, nowhere in the Allahabad manuscripts do we find the fineness of pigments or papers, or the surface opulence of the last works made for Akbar (for example, Figure 90). It is unlikely that Salim's taste was the determining element of the imperial workshops, although once he inherited the throne and the artistic establishment, he certainly encouraged further developments.

THE style practiced by Mughal artists in the years preceding Akbar's death in 1605 has little immediate visual similarity to works made at the beginning of that emperor's rule. Throughout his reign, however, Akbar's debt to his father was considerable. Humayun had commissioned portraits as well as visual records of contemporary events—the basic subjects of Akbari painting. He also owned European textiles, and the frequent references to “the picture galleries of China” prove awareness of Chinese paintings. The influence of foreign images, a crucial element for understanding late-sixteenth-century style, has hitherto been considered an Akbari innovation.

It was within a system of established practice, therefore, that Akbar demanded specific imagery: adventure stories first, then historical accounts of past events. The subjects he chose reveal his personal interests at particular moments (especially when, like the *Tuti-nama* or *Hamza-nama*, they are not in the usually accepted repertoire). But artists made the decisions as to how a particular scene would be illustrated, and when possible they drew on established compositions, only occasionally adapting them to denote a specific location. When necessary,



92. King Lavana Visits the Village of Outcasts. From a Jog Vashisht manuscript. Mughal (at Allahabad), ca. 1602.

artists were quite capable of compositional innovation—but only when necessary. Consequently, as we have seen in Figures 8 and 65, similar compositions are found for both history and fantasy subjects.

Painters worked primarily from other paintings, but they also were affected by the demands of workshop directors. The importance of Abd as-Samad and the change in workshop style that occurred after his death tell us how important he—an artist, not an emperor—was in determining the character of the imperial studio. It is wrong to consider painting simply or even primarily as a response to the patron. Great patrons can inspire great painters, but major artists can also create the circumstances that permit great patronage.

Mughal paintings contain evidence of the unique interests of both artists and their imperial employers. Equally important, they reveal the vital role of the past in the Mughal world. There is little evidence here of the radical innovations long credited to Akbar. It was only because of the solid accomplishments of Humayun's artists and patronage that he achieved so much so quickly.

ABBREVIATIONS

NOTES

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

INDEX

Abbreviations

- AA Abu'l Fazl 'Allami, *A'in-i-Akbari*, trans. H. Blochmann. 3 vols. Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1938–1949.
- AN Abu'l Fazl 'Allami, *Akbar nama*, trans. Henry Beveridge. 3 vols. Reprint. Delhi: Rare Books, 1972–73.
- BB B. P. Saksena, "Memoirs of Baizid," *Allahabad University Studies*, vol. 6, p. 1.
- BN Zahiru'd-din Muhammad Babur Padshah Ghazi, *Babur-nama*, trans. A. S. Beveridge, London: Luzac, 1922.
- HN Gulbadan Begum, *Humayun-nama*, trans. A. S. Beveridge. Reprint. Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delli, 1972.
- JN Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri; or Memoirs of Jahangir*, trans. A. Rogers, ed. Henry Beveridge. 2 vols. Reprint. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1968.
- MT 'Abdu-l-Qadir ibn-i-Muluk Shah, al Badaoni, *Muntakhabut-t-Tawarikh*, trans. W. Haig. 3 vols. Reprint. Patna: Academica Asiatica, 1973.
- MU S. N. Khan, *Maathir-ul-Umara*, trans. Henry Beveridge. 3 vols. Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1911–1914.
- QH Khwandamir, *Qanun-i-Humayuni*, trans. B. Prasad, Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1940.
- TV Jauhar, *Tezkereh al Vakiat*, trans. Charles Stewart. Reprint. Delhi: Kumar Brothers, 1970.

Notes

Introduction

1. Stella Kramrisch, *Painted Delight: Indian Paintings from Philadelphia Collections* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1986), pp. xiii, xv.
2. Stuart Cary Welch, *The Art of Mughal India: Paintings and Precious Objects* (New York: Asia Society 1963), p. 24.
3. AA 1:114.

I. Humayun and the Young Akbar

1. N. Elias, ed., *A History of the Moghuls of Central Asia (being the Tarikh-i-Rashidi of Mirza Muhammad Haidar, Dughlat)* (London: Curzon, 1895), p. 226.
2. BN 520.
3. One such drawing of a Mughal nobleman, formerly in the Golubev Collection, is now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (14.596).
4. AN 2:67.
5. The translation, by C. M. Naim, has been published in Pramod Chandra, *The Tuti-nama of the Cleveland Museum of Art and the Origins of Mughal Painting* (Graz: Akademische Druck und Verlagsanstalt, 1976), p. 173.
6. Sherman E. Lee and Pramod Chandra, "A Newly Discovered *Tuti-nama* and the Continuity of the Indian Tradition in Manuscript Painting," *Burlington Magazine* 105 (December 1963), 547-554.
7. Chandra, *Tuti-nama of Cleveland*, pp. 62-72.
8. See, for example, Albrecht Altdorfer's *Landscape with a Large Pine* in Berlin (*Dürer and His Time: An Exhibition from the Collection of the Print Room, State Museum, Berlin, Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz*, Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1965, no. 131.)
9. See Milo C. Beach, *The Grand Mogul* (Williamstown, Mass.:

Clark Art Institute, 1978), pp. 155–157, where evidence of the known presence of European prints in sixteenth-century India is also given. References to textiles abound in contemporary chronicles. From a historical account of Humayun's reign written before 1535, for example, the following can be cited: "The clever lascars pitched a large royal pavilion, the tent of hope, close to the imperial residence, and canopies made of woolen cloths of seven colours and European velvet were erected on stands all round it to put out of countenance the gorgeous decorations of the heavens" (*QH* 65). And in an account of her brother Humayun's reign, Gulbadan Begum wrote: "The covering of the pavilions and of the large audience tent was, inside, European brocade, and outside, Portuguese cloth" (*HN* 113). That some of these cloths were decorated with figural designs is suggested by frequent references to the spaces they adorned as being "the envy of the Chinese picture galleries" (*QH* 65).

10. Humayun's invention of this turban is described in Khwandamir; see *QH* 49–50.

11. *AN* 2:634.

12. For a thorough discussion of the artist, whom the authors identify with the Iranian painter Dust Muhammad, see Martin Bernard Dickson and Stuart Cary Welch, *The Houghton Shahnameh* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), pp. 118–128. Mir Musavvir, father of the Mir Sayyid Ali, was a fourth painter to travel to the Mughal court at this time; see Chandra, *Tuti-nama of Cleveland*, pp. 188–190.

13. *BB* 96, where the author also states: "The best painter in those days was Mulla Dost. He had fled from the court of the Shah because he could not keep his vow to abstain from drinking." The implication of that passage is that Mulla Dust was present when Mir Sayyid Ali and Abd as-Samad arrived in Kabul.

14. See Anthony Welch and Stuart Cary Welch, *Arts of the Islamic Book: The Collection of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan* (Ithaca, N.Y., and London: Cornell University Press, 1982), pp. 146–148.

15. *BB* 93.

16. *MT* 2:15.

17. This episode is included in various texts; see *AN* 2:104–105, 127–129; *MT* 2:14–17, 3:314, n. 1, 3:331; *MU* 1:198–199.

18. Laurence Binyon and T. W. Arnold, *The Court Painters of the Grand Moguls* (London: Milford, 1921), p. 69 (where the accompanying figures are misidentified) and pl. V.

19. Only one other work by Bhagavati is known to me, an unpublished drawing in the Royal Library, Windsor.

20. *BN* 76.

21. *HN* 124.

22. *TV* 43.

23. I am grateful to S. Dillon Ripley and Bruce Beehler, of the Smithsonian Institution, for identification of the species.

24. See Michael Brand and Glenn D. Lowry, *Akbar's India: Art from the Mughal City of Victory* (New York: Asia Society Galleries, 1985), nos. 36, 48.

25. That this motif quickly entered the repertoire of Rajput painting in India also is indicated by *The Rainy Season*, a work from Mewar datable to ca. 1625–1650; see Kramrisch, *Painted Delight*, no. 62.

26. I am grateful to Glenn D. Lowry for locating a photograph of this work.

27. The most thorough discussion of the Topkapi albums is given in *Islamic Art I* (1981), which is devoted exclusively to this material.

28. The influence of motifs found in the Istanbul albums on painting in India has never been studied, but the impact was on both Mughal painting and works from Rajasthan.

29. See Harry M. Garner, "Chinese Paintings of the Sixteenth Century at Schloss Ambras," *Oriental Art* (Autumn 1976), pp. 262–264.

30. Michael Brand and Glenn D. Lowry, *Fatehpur-Sikri—A Sourcebook* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, 1985), p. 258.

31. AN 3:651. See also note 9 above, which further confirms the recreation of the visual splendor of China as one goal of the earlier Mughal periods.

32. QH 64–65.

33. A copy of the *Chukor Partridge* signed by Shafi Abbasi and dated 1655–56, is in the album Dorn 489 in the Saltyakov-Shchedrin State Public Library, Leningrad.

34. JN 1:215.

35. Beach, *Arts of India and Pakistan*, pp. 10, 13.

36. These album pages, as well as the double-page of angels (Figures 25–26) in the British Museum, were originally in the Manuk-Coles Collection, which contained additional, highly important early Mughal paintings.

37. These derive from such Bokharan-style prototypes as *Reclining Woman*, in the Morgan Library (M.386/2; reproduced in Ernst J. Grube, *Muslim Miniature Painting from the XIII to XIX Century* [Venice: Neri Pozza, 1962], no. 72); and *Young Women*, in the Topkapi Library (Revan 1964/2a; reproduced in Norah M. Titley, *Persian Miniature Painting and Its Influence on the Art of Turkey and India* [London: The British Library, 1983], fig. 40). The latter uses identical figures and seems to be by the painter of *Loving Musicians* (reproduced in Stuart Cary Welch, *India: Art and Culture, 1300–1900* [New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1985], no. 86), a work in which the male figure wears a Humayun-period turban. Such relationships make a reexamination of attributions to Bokhara necessary.

38. The pages in the Fitzwilliam Museum have been glued onto boards. I am extremely grateful to the Museum for allowing selected folios to be lifted and examined.

39. BN 460.

40. Kamran, a poet as well, has been unjustly neglected, although a recently discovered manuscript has been proposed as the first concrete evidence of his patronage of painters; see Heather Elgood, "The Earliest Extant Manuscript for a Prince of the Mughal Family," *Arts and the Islamic World* (Spring 1985), pp. 34–39, 95. An inscription in the book, which contains six illustrations in standard Bokharan style, reportedly states that the work was copied specifically for the prince. A careful examination of the text pages shows that the illustrations were inserted at a later date. Thus, while we know Kamran was a patron, and while we might suspect that Bokharan artists would have been available to him, we do not definitively know the character of the works he commissioned.

41. See Dickson and Welch, *Houghton Shahnameh*, pp. 248, n. 21, 255, n. 9.

42. BN 22.

43. The contemporary account of this mission by Bayazid Biyat Turkman has been translated in Chandra, *Tuti-nama in Cleveland*, pp. 171–173. See also BB 97–99.

44. For example, a *Diwan* of Shahi in the Beatty Library (M. 257), the illustrations of which are in Bokharan style.

45. Chandra, *Tuti-nama in Cleveland*, p. 12.

II. Akbar as Patron

1. The full text of the *Tuti-nama* has been translated in Muhammad A. Simsar, *Tales of a Parrot: The Cleveland Museum of Art's Tutinama* (Graz: Akademische Druck und Verlagsanstalt, 1978).

2. *The Encyclopedia of Islam* (Leyden and London: E. J. Brill, 1913), pp. 548–550.

3. AN 1:160–63.

4. QH 9–10.

5. For further discussions of this painting, see Stuart Cary Welch, *A Flower from Every Meadow: Indian Paintings from American Collections* (New York: Asia House Gallery, 1973), no. 57; and Brand and Lowry, *Akbar's India*, no. 69. The work was first reproduced in Arthur U. Pope, ed., *A Survey of Persian Art from Prehistoric Times to the Present* (London: Oxford University Press, 1938–39), pl. 913A, where it was more correctly dated ca. 1555.

6. BN 280.

7. For further information on the date on the *Hamza-nama*, see Chandra, *Tuti-nama of Cleveland*, and Milo C. Beach, *The Imperial Image: Paintings for the Mughal Court* (Washington: Freer Gallery of Art, 1981), pp. 58–59, where additional references are listed. An alternate interpretation of the manuscript's date is given in Karl J. Khandalavala and Jagdish Mittal, "An Early Akbari Manuscript of Tilasm and Zodiac," *Lalit Kala* 14, pp. 9–20.

8. Chandra, *Tuti-nama of Cleveland*, p. 181.

9. *The Young Man of Baghdad Solicits Advice*, folio 305r from the *Tuti-nama*, for example, is unusually precise in its composition and decorative patterns—note the carpet, in particular—and may be by a close associate of Mir Sayyid Ali. It can be compared to the master artist's *Portrait of a Young Muslim Scholar* (see Brand and Lowry, *Akbar's India*, no. 6), a work made under Humayun's rule.

10. Many compositions in the manuscript must be seen as manipulations of the Bokharan traits. *Malak Mah Captured by Eunuchs* (8770/44), for example, animates the surface of a scene set against potentially static architecture, by a stronger, more vivid architectural pattern; slight modeling of the figures to give them volume; and the highly dramatic action. *'Amr Robs Manzur-i-Kamran* (8770/35) forces us to focus our attention on the large sleeping figure and the red cloth in which 'Amr has piled his treasure. This centralizing of visual interest on a single exciting moment of the story is perhaps the trait that most distinguishes these paintings from the Bokhara style; the artists have thereby made narrative all-important.

11. For substantiation of the date, the work should be compared to folio 291v in the Cleveland *Tuti-nama* manuscript.

12. The textual identity of the narrative scenes is not clear, although they relate compositionally to the more conservative *Hamza-nama* pages. The category also includes a series of scenes of elephant combats. The most interesting of the figural compositions may be a seated woman found in the inner room of the so-called "House of Maryam"; she is placed in a landscape that shows mastery of spatial recession. Similar paintings on paper are known; see Beach, *Art of India and Pakistan*, fig. 4. The decorative floral panels derive from Bokharan prototypes. Figure 54, for example, uses the same landscape elements as *A Couple with an Attendant* (Figure 31).

13. Terence McNerney, *Indian Painting: 1525–1825* (London: Artemis, 1982), pp. 14–17.

14. AA 1:113.

15. AN 1:505.

16. Ibid., 2:225.

17. Ibid., 3:364.

18. Ibid., 3:346–347.

19. The phrase was used in the preface to the *Tarikh-i-Alfi* (History of a Thousand Years [of Islam]), commissioned by Akbar in 1581–82; see S. A. A. Rizvi, *Religious and Intellectual History of the Muslims in Akbar's Reign* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1975), pp. 354–355.

20. Compare Figure 59 with a similar composition by Basawan, reproduced in Leigh Ashton, ed., *The Art of India and Pakistan* (London: Coward McCann, 1949), no. 669, pl. 128.

21. AA 1:114.

22. Rizvi, *Religious and Intellectual History*, p. 254.

III. Akbar and the Past

1. AN 3:702–703.
2. Ibid., 3:748.
3. The manuscript has been fully published; see Annemarie Schimmel and Stuart Cary Welch, *Anvari's Divan: A Pocketbook for Akbar* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1983).
4. AN 1:179. See also Brand and Lowry, *Akbari's India*, pp. 15–17, where it is further noted that Akbar's mother and one of his chief wives both bore the name of Miryam.
5. Chandra, *Tuti-nama of Cleveland*, p. 183.
6. Nizami, *The Story of Layla and Majnun*, trans. R. Gelpke (London: Bruno Cassirer, 1966), p. 208.
7. Ibid., p. 176.
8. In this regard the composition remains remarkably similar to that of the much earlier *A Dervish Praising God While His Companions Sleep*, painted by Abd as-Samad about 1550; see Laurence Binyon, J. V. S. Wilkinson, and Basil Gray, *Persian Miniature Painting* (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), no. 231, pl. CVa. See also Milo C. Beach, "The Mughal Painter Daswanth," *Ars Orientalis* XII (1982), fig. 4, where the same basic composition appears in a work painted when Daswanth was strongly under Abd as-Samad's influence. A similarly related painting inscribed to Muhammad Sharif, son of Abd as-Samad and perhaps known also as Bihzad, is in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; see Milo C. Beach, *The Grand Mogul*, no. 5r.
9. JN 15.
10. Ibid., 14.
11. AA 1:268.
12. Ibid., 3:453.
13. See G. M. Meredith-Owens, "The British Museum Manuscript of the Akbar-nameh," *Burlington Magazine* 109 (1967), 94.
14. AN 2:28–29.
15. The study by Abd as-Samad is in the Musée Guimet, Paris; see Richard Ettinghausen, "Abdu s-Samad," *Encyclopedia of World Art* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960), I, 15–17, pl. 15.
16. AN 2:416, 417.
17. Ibid., 2:417–418.
18. Ibid., 3:17, 21.
19. Besides frequent dissimilarities in composition, the later *Akbar-nama* is far more developed in its attitudes toward portraiture—as seen in the illustration of *Akbar Hunting* (Figure 85)—and in its attention to convincingly detailed settings. Architecture in the second *Akbar-nama* seems to depict sites as specific as the human portraits it assembles; this is not the case in the earlier version. An illustration of the construction of Fathpur-Sikri (fol. 153) in the Beatty Library copy shows, among the buildings at the top of the scene, an exact depiction of what is traditionally known as the Diwan-i-Khas; see Milo C. Beach, "Fathpur-

Sikri: An Introduction," in *Fathpur-Sikri* (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1987), the proceedings of a symposium held at Harvard University in 1985. However, the painter Balchand made the domes bulbous, a pleasant but fictional elaboration of the heavier domes actually on the building. Only afterward were architects able to build what Balchand so effortlessly described, an indication that architecture in paintings could suggest innovations that were not actually constructed until later.

Architecture in the second *Akbar-nama* is rooted in a reality far more specific than found in the earlier copy of the same text. A painting from the Victoria and Albert Museum volume (Brand and Lowry, *Akbar's India*, fig. 3), of the *Hathipol* entrance to the city of Fathpur-Sikri, for example, places the caravanserai to the right, waterworks to the left, and a ceremonial Elephant Gate at the center. All of these elements do exist, but the caravanserai is quite different in shape, and the waterworks bear little visual relationship to the structures at the site. The artist was dealing with general concepts to evoke existing buildings. Nonetheless, this was more specific than the *Hamza-nama*, in which many of the myriad tall towers and fanciful pavilions seem completely imaginary.

20. J. V. S. Wilkinson and Laurence Binyon, *The Shah-namah of Firdausi* (London: The India Society, 1931). The volume is now Ms. 239 in the Royal Asiatic Society, London.

21. Some examples of major Timurid manuscripts known to have been in the imperial library in Akbar's time are discussed in Brand and Lowry, *Akbar's India*, pp. 87-105.

22. A preliminary discussion of the Allahabad manuscripts is given in Beach, *Grand Mogul*, pp. 33-41.

23. Figure 92, for example, can be attributed to the same artist as an illustration in the *Diwan* of Amir Hasan Dihlavi (folio 109, reproduced in Beach, *Grand Mogul*, p. 34), made at Allahabad for Salim in 1602. Other folios, attributable to Salim Quli and Kesu, further substantiate the reassignment of the volume to Allahabad. That Salim (Jahangir) was interested in the text is unquestioned; a new translation from Sanskrit into Persian was prepared for him before his accession; see D. N. Marshall, *Mughals in India: A Bibliographical Survey* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1967), p. 377.

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